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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) program in Western Australia was undertaken. Questionnaires were mailed to a stratified random sample of NOW enrollees. Responses were received from 308 women, a 45.7 percent response rate. Findings included the following: 81 percent of NOW students went on either to paid employment or further study; 62 percent of all students who enrolled in a NOW course progressed to further study; 76 percent of students who took all 5 units of the integrated program progressed to further study; NOW facilitated access to further study irrespective of previous educational level; 75 percent of students who undertook further study did so at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges; 57 percent of NOW students found paid employment; and 44 percent participated in volunteer work. However, women's access courses struggled to survive on the margins of TAFE funding arrangements and within an often unsympathetic climate. Lack of services, such as child care, had prevented women from undertaking NOW. Among policy recommendations, the following were included: increasing efforts to provide NOW courses, dropping fees where they had been introduced, providing child care, and expanding courses for women with special needs. (The document also includes an extensive review of women's programs in Australia, a listing of terms and abbreviations, a 30-item bibliography, and 6 appendices that provide questionnaires and data tables.) (CML)

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RESKILLING RITA

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TAFE IN AUSTRALIA : AN EVALUATION OF RE-ENTRY COURSES FOR MATURE-AGE WOMEN, AND THEIR LINKS TO FURTHER STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT

"The NOW (New Opportunities for Women) program provided me with an important stepping-stone onto further study"

"It does as it says; it is giving women new opportunities"

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- Jennifer Binns -

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TAFE Women's Advisers in other States and Territories made extensive resources available to the project and were always prepared to meet numerous requests for additional information. Their friendly co-operation was much appreciated.

Thanks, lastly, to all the ex-NOW students in Western Australia who generously gave of their time to complete questionnaires and to speak to me personally about their experiences.

Jennifer Binns
February, 1989

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Access Course:	Special program designed to facilitate TAFE entry for particular groups who face social, cultural, economic and/or gender-based barriers to participation in vocational education. Also called "bridging" courses to reflect their aim of linking, in the case of mature-age women, the private world of the home with the public world of education and employment.
Accreditation:	Provides formal certification that the course and the methods adopted in delivering it are likely to achieve its aims. Accredited courses provide students with credits (advanced standing) towards other award courses (taken from ACTA Guidelines 1988).
ACOTAFE:	Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education.
Award Course:	An approved program of study, on successful completion of which a certificate is awarded. In TAFE, includes Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Associate Diploma and Diploma courses which are registered with the Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA).
CES:	Commonwealth Employment Service.
DEET:	Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training.
JET:	Jobs, Education and Training program, introduced in 1989 with the aim of encouraging and assisting sole parent pensioners to undertake vocational training and/or paid employment.
Mature-age:	25 years and over.
NESB:	Non-English speaking background.
NOW:	New Opportunities for Women, a TAFE women's access program.
Non-Traditional Fields:	Those areas of study or employment where women consistently comprise less than 38% of participants (taken from Pocock 1987).

Preparatory Course:	Refers to a DEET-funded program for the long-term unemployed and other jobseekers identified as disadvantaged by the CES. Designed to prepare participants to enter specific vocational courses in fields where there is a labour market demand.
Re-Entry:	Return to study or paid employment by people who have been absent from these spheres of activity for lengthy periods.
Rural:	All areas outside the capital cities and the other major metropolitan conglomerates of Geelong, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Gold Coast. Includes people living on the land, in rural towns or regional centres (taken from the Working Party on Post-Secondary Education Draft Report 1987).
TAFE:	Technical and Further Education.
Traditional Female Fields:	Those areas of education and employment in which women have historically been the majority of participants, and which have been socially, economically and politically defined as "female" (taken from Rawsthorne 1988).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was conceived and conducted within a climate of social change and economic adjustment. The recent focus on the skilling of the Australian workforce brings into prominence the need for women to have access to the full range of vocational training opportunities. Furthermore, the linking in the federal arena of welfare provision with labour market policy has meant that many sole parents (most of whom are women) are attempting to negotiate the often difficult pathway from social security dependency to workforce participation. Many will look to TAFE to provide them with the necessary skills and qualifications.

It is recognized that for many mature-age women, vocational courses are not the most appropriate first step. Women who have been absent from the education system and the workforce for long periods, and/or who have a low level of basic education, often feel underconfident and ill-prepared to enter the TAFE system. The various women's access courses offered by TAFE throughout Australia help women to prepare for a return to study and/or employment. They assist students to gain the personal and vocational skills and the information required to effect this re-entry.

This report provides a national overview of TAFE women's access courses and documents their successful outcomes. At the same time, gaps in the provision of women's access courses are identified. New Opportunities for Women (NOW) is the largest access course in terms of number of students and geographical spread. As such, it provides the basis for this report, however, it is believed that results can be extrapolated to other women's access programs.

NOW courses are offered in NSW, SA, WA, Tasmania and the ACT. Equivalent courses, variously named, are offered in Victoria and, on a limited basis, in Queensland. While TAFE colleges are the principal venue, courses are also offered through TAFE learning centres and some neighbourhood learning centres. These provide women with an alternative point of access to NOW and other re-entry programs. Many women, particularly those who are isolated in the home with small children, prefer to re-enter the education system via learning centres. Learning centres, both TAFE and community run, also enable access courses to be offered as outreach programs in rural areas.

Access courses have been made available, often as a result of co-operative arrangements between TAFE and outside organizations, to women with special educational needs - Aboriginal women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), socially disadvantaged women, deaf women, female prisoners and sole parent pensioners. Such organizations include the federal Department of Employment, Education and Training (sole parents and long-term unemployed women) and its State equivalents, and Departments of Community Services (socially disadvantaged women), Aboriginal Affairs and Corrective Services.

Selected findings appear below from the evaluation conducted for this project of the NOW program in WA. These are not isolated results but, rather, mirror earlier evaluations conducted in a number of States (for WA, see Pine 1985 and Harvey 1986; for Victoria, Jenkins 1984; for SA, LeDuff 1988; for NSW, Rawsthorne 1988).

- 81% of students went on to either paid employment or further study.
- 62% of all students who enrolled in a NOW course progressed to further study.
- 76% of students who took all 5 units of the integrated program progressed to further study.
- NOW facilitated access to further study irrespective of previous educational level.
- 75% of students who undertook further study did so at TAFE.
- 53% undertook award courses.
- 57% of NOW students found paid employment.
- 44% participated in volunteer work.

This positive statistical picture was affirmed and given substance by the hundreds of comments received from ex-students who responded to the WA survey. These women described NOW as a "springboard" or "bridge" between,on the one hand, their lives at home raising children and, on the other, the public world of work and study. They wrote and spoke of "re-built self confidence", "incentive", "direction" and "getting motivated", of lecturers who were "helpful and supportive", and of their subsequent "progress" and achievements. Rural women highlighted the positive impact on families and communities, while at the same time drawing attention to the substantial educational barriers that they continue to face.

Such outcomes, successful in both quantitative and qualitative terms, are achieved against the odds. Women's access courses struggle to survive on the margins of TAFE funding arrangements and within a climate that is often unsympathetic. Moreover, many women have not had the opportunity to undertake NOW or similar course because of limited provision, especially in rural areas, lack of child care and, most recently, the imposition of fees in some regions.

This report recommends that TAFE authorities in the NT and Queensland increase their efforts to provide women's access courses and that other States ensure that such courses are offered regularly in as many locations as possible. For isolated rural areas, this will entail adopting innovative approaches that meet the educational needs of country women in a cost-effective way.

It is imperative that policy decisions be informed by an awareness of the factors that militate against women's participation in NOW and other access programs. For example, access courses must be free of charge; the introduction of fees, as has occurred in NSW and the ACT, effectively excludes poor women. The limited provision of childcare is a major barrier to the participation of women with small children. This shortage particularly disadvantages sole parents and newly-arrived migrants, many of whom lack family support, and Aboriginal mothers whose use of existing facilities is affected by issues of cost and cultural appropriateness. This report therefore recommends that childcare arrangements be built into course provision, including provision in rural areas, and that these arrangements be culturally appropriate.

Access courses for women with special needs have not been widely available, and the barriers to participation faced by these women are compounded if they live in isolated rural communities. A strengthening and extension of co-operative arrangements between TAFE and relevant outside organizations will serve to expand course provision to the most disadvantaged women.

The NOW program in WA, together with similar courses across Australia, has facilitated entry to further study largely without establishing formal links to mainstream course offerings. The current trend towards the accreditation and mainstreaming of women's access courses will formalize those links but this must not be at the expense of the philosophy and approach which underlie their success. It is particularly important that teachers who understand and emphathize with women's lives be recruited to these programs.

This project was concerned with answering the question: "Access to what?" The current research confirms findings from earlier studies undertaken in many States. Women progress, in the main, from access programs such as NOW to TAFE courses in the traditional female areas of office/clerical, fashion, childcare and community services. Therefore, as well as encouraging women to enter non-traditional areas, their traditional fields of study must be adequately resourced and provide scope for higher-level qualifications. Barbara Pocock's comprehensive report of women and TAFE (1987) makes it clear that traditional female study fields lag behind the trade areas on both these counts. This situation must be redressed if traditional female courses are to provide women with the educational qualifications and occupational skills needed to secure entry to the primary labour market and to contribute to the needs of a changing economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Course Availability

Recommendation 1 (5.1, 5.4)

That women's access courses be made available in all states and territories to all women, in both metropolitan and country areas, on a regular basis. Specifically:

(a) TAFE authorities in Queensland and the Northern Territory increase their efforts to provide women's access courses in their regions.

(b) All States and Territories ensure that access courses are offered regularly in as many locations as possible.

(c) All TAFE authorities investigate ways of making access courses available to women who are geographically isolated from TAFE centres. This investigation should include a consideration of innovative approaches developed and used successfully in various States (see 5.4.2 for details).

(d) Wherever feasible, women's access courses be offered in a variety of modes - full-time, part-time and evenings - to ensure that all women are able to participate. Part-time and evening courses are necessary if women who are working in dead-end jobs in the secondary labour market are to have the chance to enter worthwhile careers.

Special Needs

Recommendation 2 (5.3, 5.5 - 5.9)

That women's access courses meet the needs of all women in a culturally and socially appropriate way.

(a) This may mean the design and delivery of special courses for women who cannot successfully participate in regular NOW programs.

(b) TAFE Equal Opportunity or Women's Interests Units (or their equivalent) should consult with relevant sections within TAFE, and with outside bodies, including representatives of the target group, in relation to the re-entry needs of Aboriginal women, disabled women, women of a non-English speaking background, women prisoners, sole parents and women who are socially disadvantaged.

Recommendation 3 (5.5)

That TAFE Student Services investigate the provision of support services (personal counselling and tutorial assistance) for NESB students undertaking mainstream courses.

This report identifies the need for ongoing support for students of non-English speaking backgrounds who progress from a women's access course to further study.

Childcare

Recommendation 4 (5.2, 6.3)

That childcare be arranged in conjunction with, and to be included in the budget for, all women's access courses. This is the practice in South Australia. Options which may be explored in the absence of a campus-based centre are:

(a) Arrangements with community-based childcare centres whereby the centre allocates places to TAFE students enrolled in an access course. This may require TAFE funding of an additional childcare worker, an arrangement routinely used in South Australia.

(b) Organization and funding of family day care arrangements in rural areas.

(c) The use of mobile childcare and family day care to meet the needs of socially and geographically isolated women.

(d) The subsidization of students' child care costs, with assistance to be based on need.

(e) Negotiations of joint funding arrangements with the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the utilization of special grants through the Children's Services program in order to provide culturally-appropriate child care for migrant and Aboriginal students respectively.

Accreditation and Mainstreaming

Recommendation 5 (6.5, 6.6)

That any moves towards the accreditation or mainstreaming of women's access courses take account of the following issues:

(a) The need to preserve the philosophy and approach to women's re-entry education that has evolved from an understanding of the position of women in our society, and from the practical experience of running access courses over a number of years.

(b) The importance of using teachers who have an appropriate background, a sound understanding of women's social position and the disadvantages they face in the areas of education and employment and an appreciation of the culture of the target group. Formal teaching qualifications should be preferred but not mandatory. Flexibility in teacher recruitment is required so that suitable people are not excluded; this is particularly important in relation to access courses for Aboriginal women.

(c) The need for examinations preparation to be included in the syllabus.

(d) The need to develop special bridging courses in Mathematics, Science and English for women who are not ready - either educationally or personally - to undertake mainstream units.

(e) Following from point (c) and (d) it is imperative that women are not set up to fail. Confidence enhancement is the greatest achievement of NOW and other women's access courses, and this would be undermined if women failed the accredited units taken as part of the course. The building of women's self-confidence, so that they are able to make and implement appropriate choices, should continue to be the primary objective of women's access programs. This should not be put at risk by the processes of accreditation and mainstreaming.

(f) Access courses should continue to provide a non-accredited core module comprising effective communication (assertion skills), decision-making and personal development (self-esteem). The nature of these units makes them unsuitable candidates for accreditation.

(g) Women who undertake accredited units as part of a NOW course should be encouraged to undergo formal assessment but should retain the option of not being examined.

(h) Continuous assessment, self-assessment and the compilation of portfolios provide a valid method of assessment and one which is less threatening than examinations.

Fees

Recommendation 6 (6.7)

That women's access courses be free.

The imposition of fees will preclude the most educationally disadvantaged groups of women from participating in the very courses which have the potential to ameliorate their disadvantaged position.

Resources

Recommendation 7 (6.2)

That TAFE authorities review the allocation of financial and other resources to women's access courses to ensure that these courses are adequately and fairly resourced.

(a) Funding to include a childcare component (see Recommendation 3).

(b) To include a college-based review of classroom allocation, and access to common facilities.

(c) Students enrolled in NOW or other access courses should have equality of access to classrooms, equipment and common facilities compared with mainstream TAFE students. Women's access courses should not be treated as less important than other courses, and should not automatically be relocated to (unsuitable) off-campus venues as a way of relieving pressure on college facilities.

(d) Priority should be given to the allocation of a classroom for the duration of the course to provide students with a "home base". This provides an important source of security for women who may initially feel underconfident about entering the education system after a long absence.

External Funding Sources

Recommendation 8 (6.2)

Following from 7, that TAFE authorities adopt an innovative approach in identifying and utilizing external sources of funding.

(a) Co-operative ventures with government and non-government bodies concerned with the needs of specific client groups (Aboriginals, the disabled, migrants, welfare and community services clients, prisoners) should be explored.

(b) Established arrangements with DEET in relation to sole parent pensioners should be maintained and strengthened.

Evaluation

Recommendation 9

That regular evaluations of women's access courses be conducted to ensure that courses are meeting their objectives, and to substantiate and validate the wealth of ad hoc evidence regarding their successful outcomes.

The two-part evaluation model developed in NSW is recommended (see Rawsthorne 1988:4.1 and Appendices). Briefly, this comprises:

Part 1 - three-stage survey of all participants:

Stage 1 - Application Form completed by prospective students at enrolment. This would collect demographic, educational and employment history data.

Stage 2 - Evaluation Form (Questionnaire) completed by students at the end of the course. This would allow the students to comment on and criticise the course, and would gauge the impact of the course on future aspirations.

Stage 3 - Evaluation Form (Questionnaire) completed approximately 6 months (or more) later. This documents the employment and educational outcomes, and the perceived gains from participating in the course.

Part 2 - two-stage in-depth study of one course's participants:

Stage 1 - During the course.

Stage 2 - Follow-up after 9 months.

Traditional Female Fields of Study

Recommendation 10 (6.8)

TAFE authorities give priority to the implementation of recommendations numbers 9 and 13 of the Pocock report (1987, Vol.2). In brief, these are that:

(a) Steps be taken to provide a broader range of vocational courses in traditional female fields.

(b) A review of current resource allocation procedures be undertaken and mechanisms put in place to ensure that traditional female fields of study are adequately and fairly resourced.

CHAPTER 1 : BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

1.1 Introduction

"Reskilling Rita" is a research project undertaken by the Women's Interests Unit, Office of TAFE, Western Australia for the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development.

The project was proposed in response to issues of national significance raised by the 1987 changes to widows' pension in eligibility, in particular, the educational and training needs of women making the transition from welfare to paid employment. This highlighted the need to examine the adequacy of TAFE access courses in facilitating the movement of women into mainstream courses as a precursor to achieving economic independence through appropriate workforce participation.

The project title was devised to capitalize on the popularity of the play (and film) "Educating Rita", and as a follow-on from, and expansion of, a CTEC-funded research project of that name undertaken in WA in 1985. The small-scale "Educating Rita" project was designed to provide an information service on study opportunities for women. Unfortunately, the handbook produced as part of the project has been rendered out-of-date by subsequent shifts in Commonwealth and State government policy and program provision.

1.2 The Aims

The overall purpose of the project was to examine women's access courses in TAFE as key elements in the process of education and skills formation for mature-age women.

The brief of the research proposal was to:-

1 Identify gaps in links to TAFE training of mature-age women seeking to (re)enter the workforce.

2 Identify the possible effects on TAFE resources of the new re-entry and skills training programs.

3 Compile a reference handbook which details relevant vocational courses and community resources, with a special focus on the role of TAFE.

The project report which follows addresses objectives 1 and 2. The handbook will be presented as a separate document.

The first objective is considered to be the most critical. This objective encompasses three elements:

1 The adequacy of provision of women's access courses, with special reference to women who, for social, cultural, physical and/or geographic reasons, face difficulties in participating in vocational education in general.

2 The degree to which women's access courses articulate with mainstream course offerings, and, to a lesser extent, with positions in the paid workforce.

3 The provision of support services, especially childcare.

The second objective refers principally to the new preparatory courses that have emerged in response to Federal Government initiatives for sole parents. As the overwhelming majority of sole parents are women, such courses can be grouped under the umbrella of women's access. This report briefly addresses the question of the likely impact of such courses on TAFE resources.

1.3 Methodology

This project is based upon:

1 Information received by letter and telephone during the latter half of 1988 from TAFE Women's Advisers (or their equivalent) in all States and Territories.

2 An extensive literature search.

3 New research, conducted from July to September 1988, into the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) program in Western Australia.

Women's Advisers to the various TAFE authorities provided information on the administration of women's access courses, course content and structure, course outcomes, participant profiles, and childcare arrangements. They also commented on any difficulties encountered in running the courses, gaps in course provision, and the impact of new initiatives. The information provided addresses objectives 1 and 2.

The literature search included any materials relevant to the project. These include policy statements, research papers, evaluations, curriculum documents, and reports of programs. Much of this material is discussed in this report in relation to both objectives.

The research into the NOW (WA) program was designed primarily as a post-course destination survey that would address the second component of objective 1. While

women's access courses across Australia have much in common (see Section 3.2), the NOW program in WA is not being presented here as in any way "representative". Rather, the intention was that the WA survey would complement extensive studies recently conducted in New South Wales (Rawsthorne 1988) and South Australia (Le Duff 1988). In addition, it was hoped that this particular case study would highlight for the reader the ways in which women's access courses link into mainstream study and paid employment.

The draft report was examined and endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

1.4 Structure of the Report

Chapter two outlines the economic context within which this research project was conceived and carried out, and emphasizes that skills formation strategies must take account of women's training needs and of appropriate support services.

Chapter three examines women's participation in TAFE in general, arguing that TAFE has a clear role to play in "Re-Skilling Rita". This chapter also provides a state-by-state overview of TAFE women's access courses.

The results of the WA survey are examined in Chapter four, with reference wherever possible to evaluations conducted in NSW and SA.

Chapter five discusses the gaps in access to TAFE in relation to particular groups of women. While there is some discussion of access in general, the chapter is primarily concerned with highlighting inadequacies in the provision of women's access programs.

Chapter six canvasses some of the key issues that must be considered by TAFE as it attempts to respond to the educational and training needs of Australian women. These include the expected increased demand for re-entry courses from sole parents, the resourcing of both women's access programs and traditional female study areas, childcare, the provision of courses for women with special needs, the accreditation and mainstreaming of women's access courses, and the charging of fees.

CHAPTER 2 : THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1 Reskilling Australia

The 1980's has witnessed an increasing emphasis within government, the union movement and the community on education and training as the key to Australia's future prosperity, and to the achievement of "social justice". This has occurred within the context of the restructuring of Australian industry in response to a changing world economy (see Skills for Australia 1987, and Australia Reconstructed 1987).

It is argued that improved education and training will enhance the efficiency, flexibility and competitiveness of the Australian economy and facilitate the process of structural adjustment which is currently underway. Vocational training provides the foundation for a skilled, adaptable workforce. It is also the means by which economically disadvantaged individuals can participate fully in a changing labour market (see A Changing Workforce 1988).

2.2 Reskilling "Rita" : Women's Access to Skills Training

Governments recognize that women have much to contribute to the broadening of Australia's skills base, to industry restructuring and to increased productivity (Skills for Australia 1987). Equitable access to vocational education is the key to this contribution and to women's participation in a reskilled workforce.

While there have been considerable gains for women in education and employment since the 1970's, barriers to their participation in particular courses, occupations and industries persist.

Women comprise almost 40 percent of the labour force yet a high proportion are concentrated in a narrow range of occupations which are mainly of lesser skill and lower status. Moreover, even in areas where women predominate, men tend to hold the higher level, well-paid, decision-making jobs (Women's Bureau 1987).

Women in the labour force are less likely than men to have post-school qualifications. Their qualifications are primarily in the teaching, health and secretarial fields. Women are severely under-represented amongst holders of trade and technical credentials (Women's Bureau 1987).

Unemployment rates for women have generally been well above male rates. Women also constitute the bulk of the "hidden" unemployed: those who want a job but are not actively looking for work because of family responsibilities, or who have been discouraged by labour market conditions (Women's Bureau 1987).

A number of practical obstacles stand in the way of women's economic participation. Girls often limit their career choice by not undertaking higher level mathematics, science and technical subjects in secondary school.

For most women, childbearing and rearing interrupt careers. Then there is the double burden of paid work and family responsibilities which imposes constraints upon women's employment choices and their ability to undertake further study which might lead to greater career opportunities. This is reflected in the number of women who give up the chance of job security, high earnings and career growth in order to work in part-time jobs close to home and family.

Women who have given priority to their families and thus have been out of the workforce for several years, or who have worked intermittently, often find re-entry difficult. These women are unlikely to possess current job skills or qualifications. Moreover, in trying to enter the job market, women may be confronted by sexism and ageism. Re-entry may also be impeded by a lack of self confidence and career direction, as well as by practical considerations such as lack of affordable child care.

If mature-age women are to successfully negotiate the gap between the "private" world of home and family and the "public" world of paid employment, education and skills acquisition are imperative. This is the case whether women are starting something new or seeking to refresh and build upon existing skills. Unfortunately, the substantial skills that women develop through the experience of managing a home and caring for a family often remain invisible and unacknowledged. These skills include co-ordination, organization, administration, financial and time management, psychology, food preparation, gardening, cooking, garment design and production, interior design and nursing. It is important that this experiential learning be recognized as valid and that women have the opportunity to convert such skills into formal qualifications.

As the major provider of vocational education in Australia, TAFE has an important role to play in meeting the needs of re-entry women. The following chapter examines women's participation in TAFE courses nationally, as well as the role of access courses in compensating for women's educational and labour market disadvantage.

CHAPTER 3 : WOMEN AND TAFE

3.1 Women's Participation in Vocational Education

Women's share of enrolments in TAFE vocational courses has expanded since 1975 so that by 1984 it was close to equitable. When adult education courses are included, the share increases to above fifty percent. The expansion is particularly marked in the over 40 age group where women's share of enrolments exceeds that of men. On the other hand, the participation of young women is lower than that of young men. (Source: Pocock 1987).

Women account for about half the enrolments in courses specifically conducted for migrants of a non-English speaking background, and for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. However, this needs to be seen within the context of the very low participation in TAFE by both men and women from these groups (Pocock 1987).

Despite the numerical equity, TAFE enrolments mirror the sex-segmentation of the labour market. 'Women are concentrated in non-trade related and non-accredited training and are disproportionately represented in many preparatory and access courses' (Pocock 1987, Vol. 1:6). Moreover, the "feminised" courses (secretarial, clerical, fashion, child care, community services) in which women predominate are smaller in number, narrower in range and under-resourced in comparison to the traditionally-male trade areas.

Training in many traditionally-female areas is, Barbara Pocock comments, 'clustered at the pre-employment or intitial skills level' (1987, Vol. 2:78). For example, in the secretarial field there are few of the advanced level courses which are commonplace in the trades area. Pocock (1987, Vol. 2:21) notes that the legal and industrial conditions surrounding apprenticeships effectively harness TAFE resources (always limited by funding restraints) to trade-related training. It is no wonder then, that many mature-age women perceive TAFE as a system designed for young men.

Women's very low participation in trade-related and many professional courses is largely a function of social factors outside of the control of TAFE. Entrenched gender stereotypes affect employer choices in apprenticeship and traineeship recruitment, as well as the career goals of young and older women.

Nonetheless, as early as 1974 the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education recognized the scope 'for women of all ages to gain formal qualifications in both the technological and non-technological fields in technical colleges, and enhance their occupational standing' (ACOTAFE 1974: xxix).

Pocock (1987, Vol. 2:20) argues that for this to happen TAFE must take a proactive role in modifying employer attitudes rather than passively accepting, and reproducing, discriminatory practices. In addition, as the ACOTAFE report emphasizes, special attention must be given to assisting married and other mature-age women to gain vocational qualifications.

Since the 1970s, TAFE authorities and other government bodies have initiated a variety of policies, programs and courses designed to overcome the barriers to women's full participation in vocational training. Most states have established Equal Opportunity or Women's Interests Units whose role is to initiate and manage affirmative action programs. These include programs designed to enhance the participation of women in pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and technical training.

In recognition of the difficulties many mature-age women face in re-entering employment and education, a range of access and bridging courses has been introduced across the country. While these are generally non-award courses with no direct links to mainstream vocational education, they have proven an effective pathway into further study and paid employment for many women. The bulk of this report is concerned with documenting these successful outcomes. In so doing, it is worth noting that women's access programs have succeeded in spite of the conditions under which they operate. They 'exist on the fringes of funding and management: many lack legitimacy, credentials and resources' (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2:21). This report is, therefore, also concerned with highlighting the gaps in the provision of women's access courses in TAFE.
The following section presents a state-by-state overview of women's access courses.

3.2 Women's Access Courses in TAFE

3.2.1 Introduction

Many of the workforce barriers outlined earlier also impede women's re-entry into vocational education. After a lengthy absence from formal education, women often lack the confidence to re-enter the system. They may be unaware of the full range of educational options open to them and uncertain about their career direction. Moreover, the fear that many women have of mathematics effectively closes the door on a whole range of study areas.

When women do enter the TAFE system, they have been faced with a male-oriented (and often hostile) college environment, a lack of childcare facilities, and timetables and enrolment procedures which do not take account of their family responsibilities. (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2).

In short, a gap exists between home life and successful entry to further study. In response to this situation and drawing on the experience of women's access programs in England, West Germany, Sweden, Canada and the USA, the first Australian program (New Opportunities for Women) was established in NSW in 1982. Since then, NOW and other access courses have been introduced in the other States and in the Australian Capital Territory. As well as being available at a number of metropolitan and rural TAFE centres, access courses have been offered by TAFE through adult learning, community, neighbourhood and women's learning centres.

While there are local variations, access programs for mature-age women in each State share a common philosophy and structure. This is encapsulated in the expressed aim of the NOW program in NSW, which is:

> to broaden and give direction to the personal, educational and vocational opportunities of mature-age women, beyond traditional notions of what is appropriate for women generally, and facilitate their re-entry into education and, within employment, into those areas with prospects of secure and satisfying work. (New Opportunities for Women Syllabus, NSW:1).

As can be seen from Table 1, the NOW Program has assisted Australian women to make the often difficult transition to further study or a career.

Table 1.2 : Outcomes by State

	VIC	WA		SA	NSW
	1982(1)	1984(2)	1988(3)	1987(4)	1986(5)
	%	%	%	%	%
Further Study	74	61	60	64	70
Paid Work	N/A	46	57	64	40

(1) Jenkins, M (1984)
(2) Pine, J (1985)
(3) Chapter 4 of this report
(4) Le Duff, G (1988)
(5) Rawsthorne, M (1988)

Access courses have a vocational focus and are oriented primarily to further study in TAFE Their syllabi and teaching methodology reflect

the importance of confidence-building, self-esteem and personal direction to the transition to further study. Therefore, as well as providing an introduction to vocational education, access courses assist women to make informed career choices, and equip them with the personal skills needed to successfully pursue further study and worthwhile employment. Access courses build on women's experience, knowledge and culture, and encourage participants to examine their place in society. They raise women's awareness of, and confidence in, new technologies and encourage entry to non-traditional fields of study or employment.

Courses are taught by appropriately experienced and trained female teachers. Teaching strategies are based on the principles of adult learning and include guided discussion, small group work, guest speakers and experiential learning methods such as role play. The curriculum is negotiated between teacher and participants to ensure that group needs are met.

Timetable design takes account of women's child care responsibilities. Start and finish times allow women with school age children to drop off and pick up their children from school. Courses also generally run during school terms. At the same time, TAFE has been lobbied to provide on-campus care for pre-school children, and for many access courses childcare is provided.

The target group is women over the age of 25 (19 in Victoria) who have limited formal education and employment histories. Information provided by TAFE Women's Advisers, together with research conducted in WA (Chapter 4 of this report) and NSW (Rawsthorne 1988) indicates that NOW students tend to be aged between 30 and 45 years, married with two, or possibly three, primary or secondary school children. Most participants are white, live in capital cities and speak English as their first language. The most common school leaving age is 15, after completion of Year 10. For many of these women, school lead directly into an office or shop job without gaining a post-school trade, technical or tertiary qualification. If they did have a qualification it would probably be in the fields of hairdressing, nursing or secretarial studies. Prior to enrolling in NOW, the majority would have been out of the paid workforce for more than six years during which time many are likely to have been involved in voluntary work.

This profile should not be taken as universally representative. While there is some variation by state, generally women from all walks of life, social strata and marital status have benefitted from NOW courses. Programs have been designed specifically for women who are severely educationally disadvantaged - Aboriginal women, women of non-English speaking backgrounds, deaf women, isolated rural women, and women who are disadvantaged socially and/or economically.

3.2.2 Western Australia

The major access course for women is the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) program. NOW courses have been offered to metropolitan and rural women since 1984. They run regularly in most TAFE colleges, and also in a limited number of Neighbourhood Learning Centres. Between 1984 and 1987, over 2000 women enrolled in the program. NOW is co-ordinated by the Women's Interests Unit of TAFE.

NOW courses run for 16 weeks on a part-time basis of 10 hours per week and are free. Women can enrol in up to 5 subjects, not all of which are offered in every location . These are:

- Assertiveness Training - identification and expression of needs in a clear, confident way.
- Abilities and Aptitudes - exploration of values, beliefs and skills, and assessment of own potential.
- Employment and Education - awareness of employment opportunities, study options and career goals.
- Personal Effectiveness - success enhancement through increased self-confidence, and improved self-presentation and communication.
- Non-Traditional Opportunities - increased confidence in the handling of tools, computers and other modern machinery.

In 1989, an additional unit will be offered following the success of the "Women Count" bridging mathematics program piloted in 1988. The aim of this unit is to reduce women's fear of mathematics, to raise their awareness of its many uses, and to provide women with the numeracy skills need to control their own financial affairs and to access further study. As an accredited unit, it will be linked to mainstream mathematics programs.

Since 1986, a small number of **Migrant NOW** courses have been offered to women of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). In addition to the core units outlined above, Migrant NOW courses include English as a second language (ESL) and employ both ESL and NOW lecturers. The ESL component aims to increase the communication skills and confidence of students, and to develop the specific language skills needed to pursue the objectives of each of the standard units. These courses are shorter and more intensive than the regular NOW. They are jointly co-ordinated by the TAFE Women's Interests Unit and Adult Migrant Education. It is hoped, subject to funding, to make them available on an ongoing basis.

In 1987 and 1988 a total of three modified NOW courses were offered at the Bandyup **Women's Prison.** The vocational component of this program is horticulture, with bonsai being included in the most recent course. This was popular with participants who saw it is a skill upon which a home industry might be based. The Bandyup program was co-ordinated by the TAFE Women's Interests Unit. In recognition of the success of the first two 6-week courses, funded by the Office of the Status of Women under the National Consultation and Assistance Programme for women, the Department of Corrective Services provided funding for an extended 12-week course late in 1988. Future availability of the programme is subject to funding.

During 1987 and 1988, pilot **'pre-NOW' or outreach courses** were run at Family Resource Centres (metropolitan and country) in conjunction with the Department for Community Services (DCS). These courses catered for DCS clients who lacked the personal skills and confidence to undertake a regular NOW course in a TAFE college. They included very young mothers, sole parents and other economically disadvantaged women, and socially isolated women. Outreach courses provide a short, informal introduction to issues of personal growth, work and study. There is no set curriculum, with course content and structure being determined by each group. DCS is currently considering the provision of recurrent funding of this program.

In line with its decision to move women off pensions and into the labour market, the Federal Government - through the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) - has funded **Preparatory Courses** at two metropolitan TAFE colleges. The first course

catered exclusively for ex-pensioners (mainly women), with later courses also including long-term unemployed women. These courses are full-time, and have varied in duration from 7 to 10 weeks. They provide a mix of NOW units and skills-based training to equip participants to enter DEET short vocational courses or TAFE mainstream programs. Courses are negotiated between DEET officers and TAFE colleges, with the Women's Interests Unit having a consultative role. Future expansion of Preparatory Courses is anticipated as the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program for sole parents gains momentum during 1989.

While high quality childcare is available at 7 TAFE campuses, the limited extent of provision relative to demand is cause for concern (Martin 1988:34). This may account for the relatively small number of NOW participants with young children (see Section 5.2 for discussion). Federal childcare subsidies are available to women undertaking DEET Preparatory Courses. However, the usefulness of this facility risks being undermined by a shortage of childcare places, both on TAFE campuses and in the community.

3.2.3 South Australia

NOW courses have been offered by various colleges since 1983. In 1989, co-ordination of the program will transfer from the Equal Opportunity Unit to the Programs Division of TAFE as part of the move towards mainstreaming. With the exception of Elizabeth College, course provision has been on an ad hoc basis. On cessation of Head Office funding (after the third course), colleges generally have not been prepared to offer further NOW courses. From 1989, funding of NOW courses will be on a program basis, with colleges receiving a targetted budget allocation. This is expected to introduce regularity into course provision. Courses will continue to be free.

Course length varies but is generally around 12 weeks. Because courses are full-time (20 hours per week), they attract Austudy. A part-time NOW course was piloted in 1988 in response to the needs of supporting parents whose part-time job commitments precluded enrolment in the regular NOW program. This course is expected to be available in 1989.

The NOW syllabus combines a core module with a vocational component. The latter comprises accredited units from award courses, with students having the option of not being assessed. The core module comprises:

- Communication
- Women's Work
- Career Planning
- Computing

A number of vocational strands are available:

- Business Studies
- Electronics/Photography
- Upholstery/Industrial Machining
- Restaurant Service
- Small Business
- Aged Care
- Floristry
- Horticulture

The development of a distance education package enabled NOW to be offered in 1988 as an outreach program in the Mt Gambier region. The course was run over 2 days per week through 5 learning centres attached to the Naracoorte College of TAFE. As most learning centres are located in schools, many women were able to use the school bus service thereby circumventing potential transport problems. Small study groups of 6-7 women worked through the program with a trained facilitator whose involvement gradually lessened as participants become more confident, self-directed and independent. Following the success of the program (completed by all students, many of whom went on to enrol in a Certificate course), it is planned to expand provision to 3 colleges in 1989.

Migrant NOW courses are regularly offered at Adelaide college. Content and structure are similar to the WA program.

NOW courses are offered in the Women's Prison, on the basis of one per year. In addition to the core module, women prisoners can choose to take accredited units from Garment and Patternmaking. This vocational focus is aligned with the prison industry of clothing manufacture.

Childcare is provided with all NOW courses. Because most colleges (including the two biggest) do not have an on-campus centre, places are purchased in community childcare centres. Family day care is arranged in isolated areas. NOW participants pay a nominal amount in the form of a donation.

Unmet demand for NOW courses is partially satisfied by short courses in assertion, women's health, communication, goal-setting, life and career planning, and study opportunities, offered through the Certificate in Women's Studies. These do not include the special child care arrangements associated with NOW courses.

3.2.4 New South Wales

NSW was the first state in Australia to offer the NOW program. Since its inception, the program has expanded from 3 colleges in 1982 to 23 in 1986. Recent policy changes have meant a 16 percent reduction in the number of courses from a peak of 43 per semester in 1988.

From 1989, co-ordination of the NOW program will transfer from the TAFE Women's Co-ordination Unit (recently cut back from 27 officers to 2) to the School of General Studies. It will be a full-time, one-semester Certificate Course entitled **"Career Education for Women (NOW)"**. A fee of $50 will be introduced, from which welfare recipients are exempt.

It is expected that the new course will incorporate much of the existing NOW syllabus. This is divided into three strands:

- Core Education Skills Strand - building confidence and skills in the areas of science and mathematics.
- Vocational Strand - introduction to non-traditional skills, technical drawing and work experience.
- Communications Strand - language skills, confidence building, and awareness of women's position in society and in the labour market.

The NOW course has been offered in four formats to meet the needs of particular groups of women: NOW (Base), NOW (Aboriginal), NOW (NESB) and NOW (Deaf Women).

NOW (Aboriginal) courses were introduced in 1984. Course content and teaching approaches were modified to make them culturally appropriate: Aboriginal studies was introduced as a core unit, and Aboriginal teachers were used. This course will be retained in its existing format. Course availability is currently under negotiation.

NOW courses for women of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) were introduced in 1984. The aim of the program was to simultaneously enhance the communication and vocational skills of participants. To achieve this, Teaching English to Adult Speakers of Other Languages (TEASOL) trained teachers were used. As with the NOW (Aboriginal) program, it is not intended to incorporate NOW (NESB) into the Certificate Course.

New Opportunities for Deaf Women courses have run on an irregular basis, and it is not possible to make any statement about future provision.

Two other women's access programs are currently in the process of being accredited. They are:

- **Introduction to Technical Occupations (INTO)**, an 18-week full-time course designed to give women access to employment or to TAFE Certificate courses.

Work Opportunities for Women (WOW), a 9-12 week part-time course with similar aims to NOW; can be offered at night to suit working women, or over a number of full days in rural areas.

As on-campus **childcare** is not widely available, the majority of women who needed child care to attend NOW courses between 1984 and 1986 made family arrangements or used Community Centres. Since 1987, there has been a 67 percent increase in the number of on-campus centres (from 9 to 15). However, the largest campus in Australia, Sydney TAFE College, still does not have a childcare centre. Neither do two major colleges in the economically disadvantaged western suburbs. The TAFE childcare policy is currently under review.

3.2.5 Victoria

Access programs for women in Victoria are not centrally co-ordinated. Individual colleges decide which courses they will offer, with provision varying considerably from one area to another. The charging of fees also varies from college to college.

These programs are conducted within TAFE colleges and, to a large extent, within Women's Learning Centres and Adult Learning Centres. These centres are physically separated from, but part of, TAFE colleges.

In 1988 the following re-entry courses were conducted:

- Bridging Science for Women - offered by 2 colleges.
- Tertiary Orientation Program (TOP) - a full year course in various subjects - offered by 1 college.
- Information Processing for Vietnamese Women - offered by a Learning Centre.
- Women in Agriculture - offered by 1 rural college.
- Women in Management - offered by 1 college.
- DEET Preparatory Courses - offered by 6 colleges.
- Access Courses - offered by a total of 18 colleges and Learning Centres.

"Access Courses" most closely resemble the NOW courses conducted in other states. A variety of courses is offered under this general heading. For example, at the Footscray Women's Learning Centre women can choose from the following offerings:

- Pre-Employment Program for Women - a one year full-time course for women who want to upgrade their job skills or return to formal education; includes English, Mathematics, Vocational Counselling, Computer Studies, Technical Skills and Work Experience.
- Introductory Studies - similar to the above but on a part-time basis.
- English - basic, advanced, and creative writing.
- Mathematics - bridging and advanced.
- Computer Studies - programming, word processing, keyboard skills.
- Science, Technical and Vocational Skills - basic maintenance and technical skills.
- General Studies - Women's Studies, Economics.
- English as a Second Language

The Box Hill Women's Learning Centre offers a wide range of short (up to 16 weeks), part-time courses which assist students to explore their options and plan for the future, to develop study skills, to enhance their self-confidence and communication skills, to manage stress and to feel comfortable with mathematics and science.

The Centre runs access courses specifically for **women of non-English speaking backgrounds.** These include courses in literacy, work and study oriented English, study skills, and catering. Similar courses are offered at the Collingwood Migrant Women's Learning Centre, both in the full-time and part-time mode. Local women can choose from a number of part-time, skills-based English courses in areas such as horticulture, catering, dressmaking and floristry.

Since 1987, the highly successful Vocational English for Migrant Women Program has run at the Flagstaff Adult Learning Centre. It is a part-time, one-semester course and is free of charge. It will be accredited in 1990 to the Victorian Certificate of Education (Year 11/12). The curriculum covers communication skills (including confidence building), the Australian education system, women's health, career planning, study skills, and job search skills.

Childcare is available at Women's Learning Centres and at some TAFE colleges. As is the case with student expenses associated with courses, childcare costs vary between colleges and are generally minimal.

3.2.6 Tasmania

In 1986, the five existing women's access courses (including NOW) were incorporated into the **Women's Studies Program.** The Women's Access Co-ordinator has responsibility for the program. Its philosophy, content, structure and aims mirror those of NOW programs in other states.

There are 22 Women's Studies subjects, six of which comprise the core module. These are:

- Understanding Computers
- Foundation TAFE Mathematics
- Career Development
- Communication
- Foundation English
- Job Seeking Skills

None of the subjects is accredited.

Hobart College conducts two full-time 16-week courses each year. More limited subject combinations are offered in less populous regions.

In 1987, a 16-week **Migrant NOW** course was conducted. It comprised a large ESL component, leisure activities, and the Women's Studies core units. Due to lack of demand, the course will not be repeated.

Two types of **DEET Preparatory Courses** for sole parents were introduced in 1988, and these will be offered in all four TAFE centres in 1989.

- Work Skills for Women - a full-time, 8 week, "taster" course which introduces students to the areas of career planning, personal development, computing, job search training and mathematics.

- Pre-Employment Skills - a full-time 16-week course comprising a core module (as above) and a choice of 5 electives, all of which are accredited.

Skills for Rural Women is offered at Devonport College of TAFE and aims to help women to pursue further study and to become more active in the rural scene. It includes communication and life skills, accounting, small business computing, marketing and selling, and vocational skills (cottage industry or tractor and farm maintenance).

Childcare is not available at any TAFE college. A needs-based subsidy scheme (from 50 to 100 percent of fees) operates but its effectiveness is undermined by the limited availability of places in community child care centres.

3.2.7 Queensland

NOW courses are not available in Queensland. However, some colleges offer women-only **Personal Development** courses. These are 16-week courses, run on the basis of 3 hours per week. Approximately 5 were offered in 1988. They cover areas such as assertion, decision-making, women's health, and job search.

Two DEET-funded **Re-entry to the Workforce** courses were also conducted during 1988. These 10-week courses are similar in content to the

Personal Development courses mentioned above. Participation is limited to eligible clients of the Commonwealth Employment Service.

There are currently no on-campus childcare centres but it is TAFE policy that all new colleges must include this facility.

3.2.8 Australian Capital Territory

NOW courses have been offered since 1984 at Bruce campus of the ACT Institute of TAFE. In 1989, a modified course will be introduced at Woden campus. NOW is a one-semester program offered on a part-time basis of 2 days per week. It comprises 3 strands:

- Interpersonal Skills - conflict resolution, decision-making, assertion.
- Women, Work and Education - women's position in society, awareness of personal skills and interests, employment and educational resources, job search skills.
- Practical Skills - four from amongst: computing, wood-working, basic electronics, applied design, drafting, laboratory skills.

Negotiations are underway to have the NOW course accredited.

On-campus childcare is operated by the Department of Community Services and is not exclusively nor predominantly for the use of students. There is generally a waiting list for the allocation of places.

In February 1988 the college imposed a fee of $80 per course ($40 for welfare recipients). This has resulted in a changed participant profile, with sole parents and other economically disadvantaged women no longer enrolling in the program.

3.2.9 Northern Territory

NOW courses are available but, due to funding restrictions, have not been offered by colleges in the NT. A NOW program (Women Returning to the Workforce) was rejected for funding by DEET in 1988. It is hoped that it can be offered at the Alice Springs College of TAFE in 1989. The Adult Migrant Education Centre has unsuccessfully sought external funding for a NOW course in 1989.

The Northern Territory Open College will offer NOW courses through regions where there is sufficient interest. This has not been forthcoming to date. The Open College also assists mature-age women to enter further tertiary studies via its regular external studies programs.

CHAPTER 4 - A CASE STUDY : THE "NOW" PROGRAM IN WA

4.1 Introduction

The New Opportunities for Women program has been running in Western Australia since 1984. Post-course destination surveys conducted in 1985 and 1986, together with extensive anecdotal evidence, attest to the successful outcomes of NOW. In line with the vocational orientation of the program, a measure of "success" is the percentage of students who enrol in further study or who secure paid employment. In a broader sense, success can be measured by the extent to which the NOW course helped women to gain the personal skills (confidence, self-esteem, effective communication, risk-taking) required to not only pursue study and careers but also to lead satisfying lives.

An aim of the present study was to evaluate four years of the NOW program in Western Australia, using both quantitative and qualitative data. A secondary aim was to compile a demographic and educational profile of NOW participants.

4.2 Research Design and Methodology

Between 1984 and 1987, there were 2366 enrolments in the NOW program in Western Australia. It was decided to conduct a sample survey of these enrolments using a mail-out questionnaire. Enrolment records were divided into metropolitan/non-metropolitan and stratified random sampling techniques used to select a sample of 787. The sample comprises both completers and non-completers. Table 2 contains sampling and response details.

Table 2 : Sampling Details and Response Rates

	Metro	Non-Metro	Total
Enrolments	1693	673	2366
Sample Size	469	318	787
Returned Undelivered	71	32	103
Sent in Error (did not enrol/enrolled but did not commence)	7	3	10
Revised Sample Size	391	283	674
Completed Questionnaires	172	130	308*
Response Rate	44.0%	45.9%	45.7%

*6 respondents did not give location

The questionnaire, with an accompanying letter (see Appendix 1), was mailed to all members of the sample population. Three hundred and eight completed questionnaires were returned. The length of time between enrolment in NOW and completion of the questionnaire ranged from 4½ years (for 1984 first term enrolments) to 6 months (for 1987 final term enrolments).

The questionnaire sought to document the long-term impact of NOW upon the lives of women, along with the women's own perceptions of its effect on their subsequent experiences. Structured questions provided data on post-course educational and employment outcomes, as well as the less tangible impact on personal development and self-confidence. Information on possible improvements to the NOW course was also collected.

Provision was made for respondents to comment generally on the NOW program and on post-course outcomes. One hundred and ninety nine of the 308 respondents (64.6%) took advantage of this opportunity.

Despite the issuing of a reminder letter and second questionnaire two weeks after the initial mail-out, the response rate of 45.7 percent was lower than expected. This may be due, in part, to an out-of-date address list. One hundred and three questionnaires were returned undelivered (these have been omitted in calculating the response rate - see Babbie 1973:165). It is reasonable to assume that an additional number were undelivered but not returned. The address list may have been faulty in a further way; a small number of questionnaires were returned incomplete because the respondent had never enrolled in, or enrolled but never commenced, a NOW course.

In retrospect, it is felt that potential existed to increase the response rate by a third mail-out. It is worth noting, however, that the standard response rate for such surveys is around 30 percent (Black & Champion 1976:389). NOW destination surveys conducted in WA in 1985 (Pine) and 1986 (Harvey) achieved response rates of 39 and 43 percent respectively.

In general, the questionnaire proved an effective instrument for collecting the required data. However, as is the case with this kind of survey instrument, misinterpretations and information gaps were evident. These suggest the need for some additional questions and the rephrasing of others. For example, the question (4) relating to non-completion of the NOW course would have illicited more meaningful information if it had asked at what stage the student withdrew. Similarly, the data on dependent children would be more useful if it were disaggregated by age group rather than by pre-school/not pre-school (Q7b).

The three questions (24, 27, 44) relating to future study plans should have included a "Possibly - Unsure" option. Question 25f would also have been improved by allowing additional options so that respondents could have indicated whether they had completed, withdrawn from or were currently undertaking a course of further study.

The section on further study at TAFE (Q31) was confusing for those respondents who had undertaken more than one course with differing experiences in each. Moreover, an open answer format may have worked better here than did multiple response. This problem was alleviated somewhat by the generous provision for comments on the last page of the questionnaire.

In addition to completing the questionnaire, 132 respondents (84 metropolitan and 48 non-metropolitan) agreed to a follow-up interview. Time and staffing constraints meant that it was possible to conduct only twelve interviews.

As a key objective of the research project was to explore the articulation from access to mainstream courses, interviewee selection was initially based on the respondents' participation in further (higher level) study. In making the selection, an attempt was made to achieve a mix of geographical locations (metropolitan/non-metropolitan), marital situations (married/not married), family formations (dependent children/no dependent children), and age. The reader should note that the twelve interviewees are not claimed to be representative of the larger group.

All interviews were conducted by the Project Officer over a two-week period during September 1988. Nine of them were face-to-face interviews conducted in the Perth metropolitan region, and three were telephone interviews of respondents living in country areas. Interviews were loosely structured, taking the form of a guided discussion (see Appendix 2 for interview format).

4.3 Participant Profile

The data for this profile are taken from the first part of the questionnaire and appear in Tables 1 to 12, Appendix 3. The profile closely resembles those described in recent evaluations undertaken in NSW (Rawsthorne, 1988) and South Australia (Le Duff, 1988).

The age range of respondents was 22 to 71 years, with over 60 percent of students being between 31 and 45 years (see Appendix 3, Table 1).

At the time of enrolling in the NOW course, around three-quarters of respondents were married, a fifth separated, divorced or widowed, and a small number single (see

Appendix 3, Table 2). Seventy-five percent of respondents had dependent children, with the most common situation being two children (see Appendix 3, Table 3). Around a quarter had one or two pre-school children (see Appendix 3, Table 4).

Less than ten percent of respondents were from a non-English speaking background (see Appendix 3, Table 5). There were no Aboriginal respondents. Unlike NSW, Aboriginal NOW courses are not yet offered in WA. Only five percent of respondents indicated a disability, with most of these being physical impairments (see Appendix 3, Table 6).

Three quarters of NOW students had left school by the age of 16 (see Appendix 3, Table 7). Less than forty percent progressed beyond Year 10 (see Appendix 3, Table 8). The most common type of post-school study was adult education courses (70.3 percent of respondents) and TAFE or Business College Certificates (29.7 percent of respondents). (See Appendix 3, Table 9).

At the time of enrolling in the NOW program almost half the respondents had been absent from the workforce for more than six years; around one fifth had paid work while doing the NOW course (see Appendix 3, Table 10).

The employment background of respondents mirrors that of the female workforce in general. They were concentrated in two occupational areas: office and clerical, and sales (see Appendix 3, Table 11). The small number who entered professional and para-professional occupations were primarily teachers and nurses. Over fifty percent of respondents had engaged in some kind of voluntary work (see Appendix 3, Table 12). While data on the type of volunteer work were not gathered, the NSW survey (Rawsthorne, 1988) suggests that the main areas are hospital or welfare, and schools.

4.4 NOW Course and Location Details

The tables contained in Appendix 4 present the statistical data for this section.

All of the TAFE colleges, neighbourhood learning centres and other locations in which the NOW course has been offered on a regular basis are represented in the survey responses. Twenty five of the 33 NOW locations are included; 16 of these are in the Perth metropolitan area and 9 in country centres (see Appendix 4, Table 13). Those not represented have offered incomplete NOW courses on a one-off or irregular basis to a small number of women. (NOTE:- their exclusion is a function of the random sampling process and/or distribution of respondents and was not deliberate).

The NOW course in Western Australia comprises 5 units: these are outlined in Section 3.2.2. Almost thirty percent of respondents took all five units, with over half of them enrolling in three or more (see Appendix 4, Table 14). The popularity of units ranged from Assertiveness Training, which was taken by around ninety percent of respondents, to non-traditional opportunities which attracted only one-third of enrolments (see Appendix 4, Table 15).

Enrolment patterns are influenced by factors other than student interest. The number of units undertaken and the selection of units is likely to be made on the basis of a woman's family and community responsibilities. In addition, during busy enrolment sessions, it is not always possible for college staff to provide women with the information and encouragement required for them to consider the full range of units in the integrated program. Furthermore, local resources determine subject availability so that in the smaller rural centres only one or two NOW units are offered.

The survey results confirm existing information on NOW retention rates. Almost ninety percent of respondents completed the NOW units in which they had enrolled (see Appendix 4, Table 16). Of those who did not complete, the main reasons given for withdrawing were lack of interest or boredom, finding paid employment, and lack of family support (see Appendix 4, Table 17).

4.5 NOW Outcomes

The tables contained in Appendix 5 present additional statistical data for this section.

4.5.1 General

For the vast majority of ex-students, the NOW course had been a bridge between home and the public sphere. As shown in Table 3, below, less than a fifth of respondents had neither undertaken paid employment nor further study subsequent to the NOW program.

Table 3 : Educational and Employment Outcomes (N=307)

Outcome	N	%
Further study only	110	35.8
Paid job only	75	24.5
Both study and job*	63	20.5
Neither study nor job	59	19.2
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	307	100.0

* Note: Not necessarily concurrent.

Respondents indicated that, since participating in the NOW program, they had engaged in a number of activities. These are shown in Table 4 below. Just over sixty percent had undertaken further study while 56.5 percent had been in the paid workforce. These positive outcomes mirror survey findings in other states. In NSW the percentages were 70 for further study and 40 for paid employment (Rawsthorne 1988) and in South Australia 64 for each (Le Duff 1988).

Table 4 : Activities Post-NOW (N=307)

Activity	N	% of Respondents (N=307)
Further study	185	60.1
Paid employment	174	56.5
Volunteer Work	136	44.2
Unemployed	52	16.9
F/T home duties	177	57.5

The proportion of respondents (57.5%) who engaged in full-time home duties at some time since finishing the NOW course is almost as great as the proportion who undertook further study (60.1%) or paid work (56.5%). It is a somewhat higher percentage than that found in the SA study (40%) conducted by Le Duff (1988).

As shown in Table 5 below, over half of the respondens to the WA survey who had engaged in full-time home duties had also enrolled in further study, while almost forty percent had held a paid job.

Table 5 : Full-time Home Duties plus Another Activity (N=177)

Other Activity	N	% of Respondents (N=177)
Paid job	68	38.4
Further study	96	54.2
Volunteer work	86	48.6

It is not known how respondents combined these activities, however, it could be argued that women's traditional familial role, especially the responsibility for childcare, moderates their participation in the public spheres of education and employment. This is illustrated by the following Questionnaire comments:

"I am keen to return to some form of study but at the moment my new baby is my priority."

"I am a sole parent and commitments at home and ill-health presently stop me from obtaining paid work."

"... the NOW program could help me to broaden my horizons ... However, while my children are pre-school, motherhood combined with part-time work and/or study is my priority."

4.5.2 Further Study

One hundred and eighty-five ex-students had undertaken further study. Almost three-quarters of the 164 respondents who answered the question on further study, stated that they had enrolled within five months of leaving the NOW course (see Appendix 5, Table 18). Just over sixty percent had enrolled in one further course and twenty percent in two further courses; a total of 311 courses was attended by the 185 respondents to this question (see Appendix 5, Table 19).

Students who took all five NOW units were twice as likely to enrol in further study as those who took only one NOW unit (see Table 6 below). While caution should be exercised when interpreting percentages from a small sample size, these results do confirm the experience of practitioners and administrators in the area. NOW (WA) is designed as an integrated program and it is believed that students obtain the most benefit from the total package (verbal advice, Women's Interests Unit, TAFE WA).

Table 6 : Distribution of Number of NOW Units and Further Study

Number of NOW Units	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
One	29	38.7	46	61.3	75	100.0
Two	32	56.1	25	43.9	57	100.0
Three	19	61.3	12	38.7	31	100.0
Four	38	66.7	19	33.3	57	100.0
Five	64	76.2	20	23.8	84	100.0

There was no appreciable variation according to marital status in the number of respondents who went on to further study. Just under sixty percent of married respondents enrolled in further study compared to around sixty-five percent of divorced, widowed and separated women (see Appendix 5, Table 20).

Respondents with dependent children were just as likely as those without dependents to pursue further study (see Appendix 5, Table 21). However, as shown in Table 7 below, respondents with pre-school children were somewhat less likely than other respondents to further their studies. This result confirms the large body of literature that documents the implications for women of inadequate childcare provision in TAFE (see Sections 5.2 and 6.3 of this report).

Table 7 : Distribution of Pre-School Children and Further Study

Number of Pre-School Children	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	147	62.6	88	37.4	235	100.0
One or more	38	52.1	35	47.9	73	100.0

Given the complex set of study barriers faced by rural women, as discussed in Section 5.4 of this report, it is not surprising to find an appreciable difference between metropolitan and non-metropolitan respondents in relation to further study (see Table 8 below). In recent discussions with the NOW Co-ordinator (WA), rural women expressed their frustration when faced with limited educational opportunities on completing the NOW course (verbal advice). Moreover, women living in isolated areas generally do not have access to the total NOW program. As one respondent wrote on her questionnaire:

> "Country people miss out on courses. This term we only have two NOW subjects to pick from."

Table 8 : Distribution of Geographical Location and Further Study

Location	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Metropolitan	116	67.8	55	32.2	171	100.0
Non-Metro	66	50.8	64	49.2	130	100.0

Eighteen of the twenty-eight women of a non-English speaking background (NESB) enrolled in another course after NOW. This proportion (64.3

percent) compares favourably with that for English-speakers (60.4 percent), as shown in Appendix 5, Table 22. Ex-students from the NOW (NESB) program in NSW were also found to have the same incidence of further study as those who had participated in NOW (Base) (Rawsthorne 1988). The NSW study found that many NESB women progress from a NOW to an English language course. This was the case with five of the respondents in the current study.

When school achievement is cross-tabulated with further study (see Table 9 below), it appears that the NOW program facilitates re-entry irrespective of previous educational level. It could be argued that the confidence in their own abilities that women gain through participating in the NOW program is a critical factor here (see Section 4.7 on participant perceptions).

Table 9 : Distribution of School Level and Further Study

	Further Study		No Study		Total	
School Level	N	%	N	%	N	%
<10 years	34	65.4	18	34.6	52	100.0
10 years	80	61.1	51	38.9	131	100.0
11 years	24	55.8	19	44.2	43	100.0
12 years	42	58.3	30	41.7	72	100.0

Over eighty percent of further study courses undertaken by respondents were taken on a part-time basis (see Table 10 below). Although he question was not asked, it is reasonable to assume that this reflects the dual role of wife and mother, and student.

Table 10 : Study Mode (Post-NOW Course) (N=224)

	N	%
Full-time courses	37	16.5
Part-time courses	187	83.5
TOTAL COURSES*	224	100.0

* Some respondents gave details of more than one course.

As shown in Appendix 5, Table 23, the preference for part-time study applied to respondents irrespective of marital status. However, divorced, widowed and separated women were more likely than married women to be studying on a full-time basis. Given the absence of a male breadwinner, it could be argued that the former group is likely to experience a greater sense of urgency about gaining a vocational qualification. This was certainly the feeling of one of the women interviewed for this study. Faced with the imminent loss of her widow's pension under the new eligibility guidelines, she was striving to finish her TAFE Diploma course as quickly as possible (see Leonie's story, Section 4.8).

Table 11 below contains data on the type of courses undertaken by ex-NOW students. The high proportion of award courses (53.5%) is notable and represents a very positive outcome. In addition, almost ten percent of courses are at tertiary entry level, giving ex-NOW students the opportunity to progress to degree courses.

It appears that the NOW program in Western Australia is meeting its goal of facilitating the entry of mature-age women into mainstream study. Nonetheless, the high level of participation in adult education (25.9% of all courses) reinforces Pocock's observation (1987 Vol.1:6) that women are over-represented in non-award courses. However, it must be emphasized that, while women do not obtain recognized vocational qualifications from their participation in adult education, it has traditionally provided them with employment-related skills which many have utilized in establishing and running a successful business.

Table 11 : Type of Courses Undertaken Post-NOW (N=228)

Level of Course	N	%
Tertiary Entry	22	9.6
Certificate	83	36.4
Diploma	29	12.7
Degree	10	4.4
Adult Education	59	25.9
Other*	25	11.0
TOTAL COURSES**	228	100.0

* Migrant and Basic English courses, Admissions Studies, Transition Courses.
** Some respondents gave details of more than one course.

As shown in Table 12 below, TAFE courses accounted for over three-quarters of all courses undertaken by ex-NOW students. This confirms that TAFE is the major provider of vocational training for mature-age women, and underlines the responsibility that TAFE authorities have to provide women with the opportunity to acquire higher level qualifications in both traditional and non-traditional fields.

Table 12 : Location of Courses Undertaken Post-NOW (N=228)

Institution	N	%
Learning Centre/CYSS	4	1.8
Secondary School	1	0.4
Senior College	14	6.1
Private Business College	12	5.3
TAFE	177	77.6
CAE	10	4.4
University	10	4.4
TOTAL COURSES*	228	100.0

* Some respondents gave details of more than one course.

As was the case in the NSW (Rawsthorne 1988) and SA (Le Duff 1988) studies, courses in traditional female fields predominated. The four most popular, comprising over half (53.4%) of all courses, were Office and Secretarial Studies; Health, Welfare and Psychology (including Childcare); Humanities and Social Science; and, Word Processing and Computing. Details are in Table 13 below.

Table 13 : Fields of Study Post-NOW (N=236)

Field of Study	N	%
Office and Secretarial	44	18.6
Word Processing, Computing	29	12.3
Humanities, Social Science (incl. Teaching, Library Studies)	28	11.9
Health, Welfare, Psychology (incl. Childcare)	25	10.6
Personal Development	21	8.9
Tertiary Entry	19	8.1
Art, Design, Music	17	7.2
Management, Business Studies	16	6.8
Applied Science	11	4.7
Bridging Courses	9	3.8
Adult Literacy, ESL	7	2.9
Other	10	4.2
TOTAL COURSES*	236	100.0

* Some respondents gave details of more than one course.

While this is by no means an unsatisfactory outcome, especially given the large number of ex-NOW students who undertook award courses, the reader should not lose sight of the barriers which impede traditional female study areas in meeting women's vocational training needs. These barriers include the relatively low number of courses, their narrow range, and the under-resourcing of these areas (see Section 3.1).

A small number of ex-NOW students enrolled in courses in non-traditional study areas. These included Agriculture and Horticulture; Applied Science; Computing; and, Management and Business Studies. The longitudinal study recently conducted in NSW found similar results. The report of that study makes an important point in relation to the small minority of NOW graduates who entered traditionally male fields:

> Bearing in mind the limited formal mathematics education of many ex students and the numerous other barriers confronted in undertaking non-traditional fields of study, this is an encouraging finding. It points to the success of the (NOW) course in providing students with the skills with which to break down gender barriers, particularly greater confidence. (Rawsthorne 1988 : 5.7).

It is, however, unrealistic to expect access courses to be able to single-handedly break through the barriers which have traditionally stood in the way of women's participation in trade-related and technological courses in TAFE. As noted in Section 3.1, the sex-segmentation of TAFE courses is largely a function of social and cultural factors (particularly employer selection practices) which are outside of TAFE control. While TAFE can and should play a pro-active role in challenging gender stereotypes in employment, the goal of getting women into traditionally male study areas should not be pursued to the exclusion of systemic reform. As Pocock (1987) notes, the ethos which gives primacy to trade courses in TAFE at the expense of "female" study areas also needs to be challenged.

4.5.3 Further Study at TAFE

For most of the ex-NOW participants who continued to study at TAFE, the experience was a positive one. The majority found the college atmosphere friendly, the teachers helpful, the lecture times suitable, and the college location reasonably convenient. (The relevant Tables are in Appendix 5, Numbers 24, 26, 27 and 28 respectively). Just under half had used the student counselling service, with almost 90 percent of these finding it helpful. (See Appendix 5, Tables 30 and 31).

A majority of respondents (65.7%) found TAFE course structures formal, particularly when compared with the structure of the NOW course (see Appendix 5, Table 25). In line with the well-established principles of adult learning, the teaching strategies used in the NOW program emphasize student participation and group interaction. Assessment is based on the presentation of folios and short assignments (both individual and group), as well as satisfactory attendance. This contrasts with the traditional teacher-student relationship and formal examination system characteristic of TAFE award courses. The experience of the NOW program suggests that such a formal system is not appropriate for adult students.

There was some confirmation of Pocock's findings that many female students 'found existing TAFE colleges inhospitable, intimidating, and dominated by young Anglo-Australian men' (1987 Vol.2:61). At interview, some women told of the sexist attitudes and sexual harassment with which they had been confronted. (See Catherine's story and Christine's story, Section 4.8). They

generally had not challenged this discriminatory behaviour, believing that the college would not support them, or being unaware of or lacking access to support services such as college-based student counsellors and Women's Liaison Officers.

Seventeen women (18.1% of those who answered the question) indicated that they had experienced childcare problems while undertaking further study at a TAFE college (Appendix 5, Table 29). The low number is not surprising given the small proportion of NOW students who have pre-school children (23.7%). It should not be inferred, however, that childcare is unproblematic for mature-age women entering the TAFE system. In the Pocock study, 'the unavailability of childcare emerged .... as the single most important barrier for women students in TAFE' (1987 Vol. 2:49). This issue will be examined again in Chapter 5 in relation to the groups of women who have <u>not</u> accessed NOW courses.

Two of the women interviewed as part of the current study mentioned difficulties with childcare provision. One woman had school-age children and the scheduling of lectures outside of school hours caused problems (see Margaret's story, Section 4.8). Another mother with a pre-school child experienced "hassles with childcare" because there was no on-campus facility at the time. This contributed to her withdrawing from the course (see Geraldine's story, Section 4.8).

The most common sources of financial support while undertaking further study of TAFE were partner and pension. The least common were student support schemes such as Austudy and training allowances (see Appendix 5, Table 32).

4.5.4 <u>Withdrawals from TAFE Courses</u>

If they had commenced a TAFE course without completing it, ex-NOW students were asked to indicate their reasons for withdrawing. A total of 81 reasons was given by the 48 ex-students who answered this question; these are shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14 : Reasons for Withdrawing from TAFE Course (Post-NOW) (N=81)

Reason	N	%
Course too difficult	12	14.8
Lecture times unsuitable	12	14.8
Course uninteresting	10	12.3
Ill health	8	9.9
Transport Problems	7	8.6
Paid employment	6	7.4
Family commitments or lack of family support	5	6.2
Financial problems	5	6.2
Childcare problems	4	4.9
Staff unfriendly	3	3.7
Pregnancy/Childbirth	2	2.5
Course too long	1	1.2
Class too large	1	1.2
Other	5	6.2
TOTAL RESPONSES*	81	100.0

* Multiple response possible.

The largest number of reasons for withdrawal are associated with the nature of the course, its structure and timetabling. Twelve respondents found their post-NOW course too difficult, ten of them found it uninteresting, and for a further twelve respondents lecture times were unsuitable. For one student the course was too long, while another withdrew because the class was too large. The other main group of reasons could be said to reflect the difficulties women experience in combining the roles of wife and mother, and student. Four respondents withdrew because of childcare problems, five due to family commitments or lack of family support, and two due to pregnancy or childbirth.

Five respondents withdrew from a TAFE course due to financial problems. Questionnaire comments by two ex-NOW students indicated that financial pressures were likely to prevent them completing their current TAFE Certificate courses. One woman, recently widowed but ineligible for a pension, felt that she "may have to give up and go back to work." The other wrote that:

> "Because of the cost of keeping two children at school and one at WACAE (College of Advanced Education) for the next three years, I don't expect to be able to do the second year of the course ... Austudy cuts off just too early for me."

In a Questionnaire comment, a student who had completed the NOW program in 1986 explained her reason for withdrawing from a TAFE mathematics subject. Because of "bad experiences" at school, this woman had ceased her formal education at 14 years of age. She wrote that:

> "The maths experience was a bit shattering but I think maybe I wasn't ready, and perhaps picked the wrong maths subject, in a formal class, instead of one where I could go at my own pace ...."

This reflects the experience of many mature-age women whose lack of confidence in mathematics (produced and reinforced in the school system, in employment, and in social situations) acts as a barrier to access to many TAFE courses. This problem will be addressed by the availability from 1989 of an introductory maths unit for women (see 3.2.2).

4.5.5 Paid Employment

One hundred and seventy-four ex-students had participated in paid employment since doing a NOW course. As shown in Appendix 5, Table 33, just under one-third of respondents had a paid job while enrolled in the NOW course. Of the 113 women (68.1%) who did not already hold a paid job, around half secured paid employment within five months of the NOW course finishing. This compares with two-thirds within six months for the NOW program in South Australia (Le Duff 1988).

Not surprisingly, almost eighty percent of the jobs held by respondents were of a part-time or casual nature (see Appendix 5, Table 34).

Sixty-five respondents indicated that they had combined paid work with further study (see Appendix 5, Table 35). In the comments section of the Questionnaire, one woman wrote that:

> "Part-time job is just a means to an end as it finances my studies by paying for petrol, text-books and fees which means there is no extra drain on family finances. Plan to attain a full-time job when degree is complete."

Give the more limited employment opportunities in rural areas, it is not surprising that non-metropolitan respondents had a lower incidence of holding a paid job post-NOW than did metropolitan respondents (see Table 15 below).

Table 15 : Distribution of Geographical Location and Workforce Participation Post-NOW

Location	Paid Job		No Paid Job		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Metro Area	104	60.5	68	39.5	172	100.0
Non-Metro	68	52.3	62	47.7	130	100.0

The difficult situation faced by rural women is illustrated by the following Questionnaire comments:

> "Collie is a pretty sports-minded town and not much to offer job wise. It is a case of having a Diploma to wash up dishes. No-one is prepared to train you."

> "Very hard to find work especially in a country town. The Italian education I had makes it harder because my Diploma is not recognized. Now the work I do is cooking. It is something I enjoy but not for too long."

Divorced, widowed and separated (D/W/S) women appeared to be slightly more likely than married women to have had a paid job subsequent to NOW (see Table 16 below). However, caution should be exercised in interpreting the results given the small numbers in two of the categories.

Table 16 : Distribution of Marital Status and Workforce Participation Post-NOW

Marital Status	Paid Job		No Paid Job		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	6	*	6	*	12	*
Married	130	55.1	106	44.9	236	100.0
D/W/S	38	63.3	22	36.7	60	100.0

* Too small to percentage.

Around one-third of ex-NOW students returned to their old occupation (see Appendix 5, Table 36). The type of work undertaken subsequent to the NOW course varied but was predominantly in the traditional female areas of clerical, sales and service (see Table 17 below). This confirms the findings of earlier surveys conducted in NSW (Rawsthorne 1988) and SA (Le Duff 1988).

The non-traditional occupations in which a small number of respondents were involved include Engineer (1), Laboratory Technician (1), Painter (1), and Film Director (1).

Table 17 : Type of Paid Work (Post-NOW) (N=234)

Occupation	N	%
Office clerical occupation	86	36.8
Sales occupation	47	20.1
Cleaner/Domestic	25	10.7
Personal Service Worker	18	7.6
Manager Owner	12	5.1
Nurse	11	4.7
Factory Worker/Labourer	10	4.3
Teacher	8	3.4
Cook/Kitchenhand	7	3.0
Bus Driver	2	0.8
Librarian/Researcher	2	0.8
Other Para-Professional	1	0.4
Physiotherapist	1	0.4
Painter	1	0.4
Film Director	1	0.4
Engineer	1	0.4
Lab Technician	1	0.4
TOTAL RESPONSES*	234	100.0

* Some respondents gave details of more than one job.

The majority of women (62.3%) were satisfied with their present/most recent job (see Appendix 5, Table 37). For the 56 who were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, the main sources of dissatisfaction were the type of work, the boss, and lack of job prospects (see Appendix 5, Table 38).

4.6 Barriers to Re-Entry

Women who had neither enrolled in further study nor entered the workforce after NOW were asked to complete part four of the Questionnaire. Twenty-seven respondents indicated that they had intended to get a paid job but had been unsuccessful, while 34 respondents had planned to enrol in further study but had not done so. (See Appendix 5, Table 39). The reasons given for not realizing these plans are shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18 : Perceived Barriers

To Paid Employment (N=66)	N	To Further Study (N=42)	N
Lack of qualifications/ experience	17	Wanted a break	8
Considered too old by employers	16	Not interested in any of available courses	4
Discrimination	1	Could not decide what course to do	6
Lacked job search skills	3	Lecture times unsuitable	5
Lack of child care	1	Lack of child care	4
Transport problem	1	Transport problem	3
Ill health	6	Ill health	2
Family responsibilities/ family unsupportive	2	Long queue to enrol	1
Lacked self-confidence	9	Family responsibilities/ family unsupportive	6
Other	10	Lacked self-confidence	6
		Could not afford	6
		Did not meet entry requirements	3
		Other	8
TOTAL RESPONSES*	66		62

* Multiple response possible.

Many of the reasons given for not pursuing study plans relate to women's childcare and family responsibilities. The Pocock report emphasizes that course provision and student services in TAFE must take account of the reaility of women's lives if the goal of equality of participation is to be achieved. Pocock noted that in 1985 three-quarters of TAFE colleges in Australia had no childcare available on campus (1987 Vol.2:50-51); that course structures and timetables in the area of management and business studies assume that students come to college in the evening after work and do not have childcare and domestic responsibilities (Vol.2:73); and that when enrolment procedures entail lengthy queueing (the practice in many colleges), women with children and those with English language difficulties face hardship and uncertainty (Vol.2:73).

4.7 Participant Perceptions : Comments and Suggestions

The tables contained in Appendix 6 present additional statistical data for this section.

As shown in Table 19 below, the NOW course was seen by respondents to be valuable in relation to both further study and workforce participation. Around 77 percent of the 163 respondents to this question believed that what they had learned on the NOW course was important or very important to their further study, while only 11 percent considered it unimportant. Sixty-three percent of the

respondents who answered felt that participation in a NOW course had assisted them to obtain a job, while just under 27 percent considered NOW unimportant in relation to paid employment. NOW courses were also favourably assessed by students in South Australia, with 55 percent believing that NOW had assisted them to enter other courses, and 66 percent to find paid employment (Le Duff 1988).

Table 19 : Participant Perceptions of Importance of NOW Course

	To Further Study		To Paid Employment	
Perception	N	%	N	%
Very important	57	35.0	32	20.0
Important	69	42.3	69	43.1
Not sure	19	11.7	16	10.0
Unimportant	18	11.0	43	26.9
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	163	100.0	160	100.0

Respondents indicated a number of ways in which the NOW course had assisted them to pursue further study and paid employment. These are detailed in Table 20 below. Confidence building was nominated by the largest number of respondents in relation to both further study and paid employment. Other benefits included knowledge of study options and the job market together with the acquisition of skills needed to successfully pursue both of these avenues, encouragement and support, and decision-making.

Table 20 : Helpful Aspects of NOW Course

	N	%
In Relation to Paid Employment (N=479)		
Confidence-building	142	29.6
Decision-making	95	19.8
Careers information	67	14.0
Job interview skills	58	12.1
Information on how/where to get a job	49	10.2
Completing job applications	41	8.6
Using CES and Situations Vacant	27	5.6
TOTAL RESPONSES*	479	100.0
In Relation to Further Study (N=613)		
Confidence-building	137	22.3
Encouragement to study	109	17.8
Supportive way of returning to study	96	15.7
Decision-making	91	14.8
Course information	77	12.6
How and where to enrol	67	10.9
Improved study skills	36	5.9
TOTAL RESPONSES*	613	100.0

* Multiple response possible.

Comments made on the majority (65%) of questionnaire forms give a more personal insight into the ways in which NOW courses affected the lives of many of the participants.

Many of the comments relate to the way in which NOW helped women to make the transition from the private to the public arena:

"The NOW course for me was the springboard from which I was launched from the home environment back into study and the workforce."
(37 year old, separated with 2 children; after NOW completed Secretarial Diploma at TAFE and presently has a part-time clerical job).

"Having been out of the workforce so long (12 years), it was a good confidence booster which reactivated me and I felt I became a person in my own right, instead of being somebody's wife and mother."
(45 year old mother of 2; currently in full-time clerical work).

"After 10 years at home rearing children, the lack of self-confidence, feeling obsolete and out-of-touch was quite daunting. The NOW program helped me to ... cross that bridge by allowing me to explore my options in a non-threatening environment."
(34 year old mother of 2; currently working part-time as School Administrative assistant).

The benefits women described include an awareness of their own skills, the confidence and encouragement to try new things, and the ability to make an informed decision about future directions:

"The NOW program helped to give me the confidence to approach further study. It also gave me an idea of which direction ... to pursue."
(35 year old divorcee who had previously been a factory worker and is currently completing the Certificate in Welfare Studies).

"The NOW program gave me the incentive to do TEE English."
(48 year old widow who left school after completing Year 10 and currently works casually as a vegetable packer and shop assistant).

"The NOW program rebuilt my self-confidence and helped me expand on the abilities I had."
(27 year old former primary teacher; has since done computing studies at TAFE and worked as a Research Officer).

"It gave me a lot of courage."
(31 year old sole parent; did a Migrant NOW course and currently completing the Diploma in Welfare Studies).

"The NOW course gave me the confidence to go ahead and start a business."
(47 year old single mother from Albany who left school at 15; currently enrolled in the Diploma of Art Studies as well as running her own art gallery).

"The NOW course was very good for getting me motivated. I had become house-bound, overweight and had no confidence. I am now continuing an Art Diploma course with much relish."
(Albany woman, married with 2 pre-school children).

Many women felt that their current situation would not have eventuated if they had not participated in a NOW course.

"If I had not attended the NOW course, I would never have considered further studies at TAFE."
(37 year old Albany mother of 4 who had left school at 16 and been out of the workforce for more than 10 years; currently enrolled in the Diploma in Office and Secretarial Studies).

"Have secured a well-paid job that I would never have thought possible."
(35 year old sole parent of German-speaking background; has re-entered the workforce following a 6-10 year absence).

"NOW has helped me believe in myself and that's why I've been able to progress as far as I have in such a short space of time."
(26 year old RSI sufferer who has progressed from NOW to a short TAFE receptionist course to hotel receptionist to sales executive).

Several women described the personal transformation that had taken place:

"Since .... the NOW course I have found my life has expanded."
(31 year old mother of young children who left school after Year 10; since NOW has completed TEE, the Associate Diploma in Library Media, and currently has a full-time position as a library technician).

"From 'mousey muted ladies' to 'laughing elated ladies!"
(A 68 year old Albany woman describing the impact that Assertiveness Training had on her NOW group).

"It gave me a new fresh outlook on my life ..."
(44 year old Albany woman who completed 9 years of schooling; since NOW has enrolled in courses in child care, commercial dressmaking and secretarial studies).

Many of the women spoke highly of their NOW lecturers:

"I found the lecturers very helpful and supportive. Without this support I may not have gone on to enrol in the courses I am currently doing."
(45 year old ex-nurse who had not worked for more than 10 years; currently completing the Certificate in Computing).

"The teacher was terrific!"

"My lecturers were helpful; extremely positive about the role of mature women in the workforce."
(45 year old, educated to 15 years in the UK; since NOW has completed tertiary entry English and is currently employed as a play leader).

The positive effect on families and communities was also described:

"It has created tolerance and understanding and a network of support within the area."
(50 year old commenting on the impact that the NOW course has had on her isolated rural community).

"My own son was motivated to return to ... full-time schooling and a whole family of friends decided to do night classes. One person's experience can touch a multitude of people."
(44 year old who has pursued Office and Secretarial Studies since completing a NOW course).

These findings confirm earlier evaluations conducted in WA, NSW and SA. Ex-students in SA believed that participation in a NOW course had helped them to plan for the future (Le Duff 1988). NSW students experienced an increase in self-confidence, and also gained an awareness of the job market and of the education system (Rawsthorne 1988). In that state, NOW (NESB) students gained confidence from their improved English skills and their better understanding of Australian society. Students in the first Migrant NOW course conducted in WA also believed that their language skills had improved and felt more confident in using English by the end of the course (Stretton 1986).

A small number of respondents to the current survey believed that NOW could have done more to assist them to achieve their goals. As shown in Table 21 below, fifteen percent of those who answered this question felt that NOW could have done more to assist them to pursue further study, while 16.7 percent believed that the NOW course could have been of greater help in relation to paid employment.

Table 21 : Could NOW have done more to assist?

Response	With Study (N=187)		With Paid Employment (N=180)	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	28	15.0	30	16.7
No	116	62.0	100	55.5
Not Sure	43	23.0	50	27.8
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	187	100.0	180	100.0

A number of improvements to the NOW course were suggested by these ex-students. These are shown in Appendix 6, Tables 40 - 42. The main suggestions were:

- Provide more information on study options (13)
- Provide individual career guidance (13)
- Make the course longer or provide a follow-up course (6)
- Have more hands-on skills (4)
- Include work experience (2)
- Employ more experienced teachers (2)
- Less discussion of personal problems (3)

Similar improvements were suggested by ex-NOW students in NSW; they wanted the NOW course to have more depth, more subjects, be longer, include more practical work, and have improved organizational arrangements such as classroom environment, teacher presentation and timetable changes (Rawsthorne 1988, 5.9).

In the comments section of the WA questionnaire three women expressed concerns in relation to the skills of the facilitator. One woman wrote that the course:

> "... lacked an experienced group facilitator or tutor and became bogged down with individual's problems."

While these are isolated comments, they do highlight the need for appropriately skilled facilitators. Given the informal nature of NOW courses, it is imperative that facilitators be experienced in group work, as well as in the subject area concerned.

4.8 Twelve Women Tell Their Stories

4.8.1 Introduction

These stories are based on in-depth informal interviews, or guided discussions. While they have been cited throughout the discussion in Section 4.5 of the data derived from questionnaire responses, no attempt is made here to analyse them. Nor, are they proffered as "typical" or "characteristic" case studies. Rather, they are presented as the accounts of twelve individual women, as told to the project officer, with minimal editing and using wherever possible the women's own words.

By locating the NOW program within the context of these women's lives, by linking it with what came before and what has happened since, it is hoped that the reader will gain from these twelve accounts a more complete picture than that given by the statistical data alone. The author considers this important because the analysis of survey data, while useful for an exploration of specific issues, necessarily fragments the experience of respondents. The two approaches - quantitative and qualitative - are seen to be complementary and, when used together, provide a sound basis for understanding and evaluating the NOW program.

4.8.2 The Stories

Licinia (31) completed high school in her native Columbia. Instead of going on to university she decided, in 1979, to emigrate to Australia. She had a smattering of English but found the Australian idiom impossible to understand. Despite communication problems, Licinia managed to find work in Sydney as a cleaner, factory hand, and a ward assistant.

At 25, Licinia married a Colombian national and they moved to Perth four years ago. Shortly afterwards their son was born. The marriage ended in 1986. Licinia is now separated from her second husband and living in an inner Perth suburb with her mother and three year old son. She receives Supporting Parents Benefit.

When Licinia enrolled in the migrant NOW program she was newly separated and going through a difficult time. "I was looking to build my confidence to go into further study", she said. "I had the idea that I wanted to do something for the future, for myself and my family, but I didn't know how to do it. I didn't have enough confidence to go and ask."

Licinia received "a lot of courage" from the NOW course, especially Assertiveness Training. She commenced the Diploma in Welfare Studies in 1987 straight after finishing NOW. Lack of English language skills, combined with responsibilities to her son, mean that Licinia can only manage 3 subjects a semester but she hopes to increase her workload next year. "I sometimes feel frustrated ... have to work three times more than a person who knows the language but the time does not allow that much", said Licinia.

Licinia's writing skills have improved since she completed a Migrant English course in first semester, but each essay is still a struggle. While Licinia speaks gratefully of the encouragement and understanding of her lecturers, she has not felt comfortable about approaching them for assistance, thinking that "they're too busy". Instead, she relies on the advice of other students which is freely given.

Licinia likes helping other people and works on a casual basis as an Ethic Support Woman, giving practical and emotional support to victims of domestic violence. She plans to pursue a career which will involve her in helping non-English speaking migrants to understand, cope with, and participate in Australian society.

In the face of her many difficulties, Licinia's positive approach to study, and to life in general, is captured in her final comment:

"I find that whatever you do that's hard, you really appreciate it. You discover things about yourself you didn't know."

Leonie (41) has five children ranging in age from 15 to 23. She is divorced and has been receiving a Widows Pension for the past 10 years. Because of changes to pension entitlements announced in the May 1987 economic statement, Leonie will lose her pension in March 1989 when her youngest child turns 16.

In Leonie's working class family "nobody ever dreamt that you would stay on at school after third year". So at 15 she left school, completed a three month secretarial course and fulfilled her mother's ambition by going to work in an office. This was shortlived, however. Leonie fell pregnant at 16, married an apprentice mechanic at 17 and over the next eight years gave birth to four more children.

The family shifted from NSW to WA in 1966, initially moving around the Northwest in search of work. After years of an itinerant lifestyle, Leonie's husband secured a "staff" position with a mining company and the family settled down. This gave Leonie the chance to overcome her drinking problem and to start work as a clerk-typist. Apart from short-term factory and cleaning work this was her first paid job since getting married.

The bottom fell out of Leonie's new found security when her husband "fell in love with his secretary" (the wife of a company engineer) and the family was "forced to leave town". The marriage, always rocky, broke up and Leonie returned to Perth with 5 children to support and no income.

Leonie heard about the NOW program shortly after the changes to the eligibility for the Widows Pension were announced. "I was desperate to start something as I knew that I would be on the dole soon" she remembers. "I enrolled in the NOW course because I had no confidence and I didn't know what I could do and what I couldn't. I thought it would give me some clues as to what to do."

The NOW course did give Leonie "some clues". She discovered "that TAFE was accessible" and learned about the range of courses and resources open to her. Being praised instead of "rubbished" for what she wrote helped overcome her longstanding fear of writing. "Primarily it lifted me up self-esteem wise", said Leonie. The realization "that a lot of women are in the same boat" was also very important.

Following the NOW course, Leonie completed one semester of the Diploma in Welfare Studies. Although she enjoyed it, Leonie needed a quicker qualification so that she could be in a secure job before her pension stopped. Feeling the urgency of the situation, she swapped to the shorter Certificate in Residential Community Care.

The assertion skills acquired through the NOW program have been a great help in both gaining entry to this course and in coping with further study. The teachers are very supportive but, says Leonie, "I'm scared all the time still, of the teachers and of failing". Despite this fear, a hangover from her school days, Leonie is progressing well and expects to graduate mid 1989.

The fact that her pension will stop ten weeks before this will cause extra stress at a critical time. But Leonie hasn't let this get in the way of her goal. "I can't stop at being angry," she said. I've got to get on and do things".

Margaret (36) lives in suburban Perth with her husband and three young children (11, 9 and 6). She left school at the end of Year 10 because, in her words, "higher education was not an expectation in a working class family."

Up until the birth of her daughter, Margaret held clerical jobs in State Government and a Building Society, briefly returning to this work in between her first and second child. In the past 9 years, as well as caring for her family, Margaret has been Honorary Secretary of the local football club and has completed many craft and hobby course.

Margaret and a neighbour enrolled in a NOW course in 1987 after having seen it advertised in the press. "I just wanted to get out of the house, start using my skills again, like writing, and start using my brain" she said.

Margaret's husband was initially "a bit funny about it", thinking the course "would be full of radical women". But Margaret discovered that the other women were just like her, that they had "the same experiences and thoughts". Through this sharing she gained support and confidence.

Margaret also discovered things about her abilities and her aspirations. "I realised that I still had a brain ... and that I could learn and that it wouldn't be as hard as I thought," she said. "It helped me discover what I wanted."

On the down side, care of her youngest child, then a pre-schooler, was a problem because places in the on-campus child care centre were reserved for full-time students.

Margaret enrolled part-time in the Certificate of Library Practice in July 1987 and is currently in stage 2. This course, "is giving her great fulfillment". However, managing a heavy assignment workload while running a home hasn't been easy. Margaret has gradually learned the short cuts of research and essay writing but still feels the need to conceal the amount of time she spends on home study.

Timetables unfortunately do not always take account of women's responsibilities. Margaret explained that "the times some of the subjects are on is after school which is the worst time for a mum with three primary school children". She is generally satisfied with her teachers but commented that "they give you the impression that they are too busy to help".

Since May of this year Margaret has been running a small office. Recently she has taken on additional work and reduced her study load. The extra earnings will pay for her children's private school education.

Like many mothers, Margaret is prepared to put her children's education before her own. "I've had my run and now its their turn", she said. Nonetheless, she plans to complete her course no matter how it long it takes; she's "the type who likes to see things to the end".

After matriculating, **Louise** (33) qualified as a nurse and practiced for two years in Narrogin. At age 24 she married a farmer. They have two children aged 5 and 3.

Their 26,000 acre property is part of a newly established farming area in the South West of WA. Concerned at the stress experienced by farming people, Louise worked with the Esperance TAFE Centre to introduce adult education to the local community. Following the success of the first outreach course, Introduction to Computers, the NOW program was offered for the first time in 1987.

Louise explained that local women had become isolated. Having to work long hours on the farm to make ends meet, they lacked the time and energy to socialize. The NOW program brought the women together allowing them to share their problems in a supportive environment. "This was the first time since moving to the district that I'd had much to do with the other women", said Louise. "The NOW course made me realize that the other women were a lot like me."

Although a self-proclaimed "loud mouth", Louise lacked confidence in social situations. She had a negative self image and avoided community activities for fear of "making a fool of myself". Through the NOW course, Louise learned to value herself as "a person in my own right", rather than as the appendage of her husband.

"NOW encouraged me to participate in the community", said Louise. Since NOW she has become editor of the local paper, secretary of the Parents & Citizens, and media contact for a controversial local road project. Louise has also set up a First Aid facility, established a lucrative acquaculture business, and is participating in sport for the first time in years. In her "spare time", she is studying Pre-Calculus Mathematics. If Louise's recent achievements are any indication, this may well develop into a Degree in Mining Engineering!

And the whole community is benefiting. What Louise learnt on the NOW program has had a ripple effect in her own family. Planning and goal-setting skills have been successfully applied to the expanding family business.

Louise is full of praise for the staff of the local TAFE Centre who "deserve an enormous accolade for ... (their) work ... in our outlying isolated area".

Lorraine (47) grew up in a small wheatbelt town. She did not consider staying at school beyond her Junior Certificate (Year 10), opting instead to enter the workforce as an office assistant. Until her marriage at 25 years of age, Lorraine held a variety of office jobs in the country and in Perth. After this she did some casual work but had no career ambitions, being content to be a housewife. Her husband's increasing domination prompted Lorraine to question women's "accepted role". They separated shortly after returning from a six year stay in Britain and Spain. Lorraine now lives with her three children (21, 18 and 12) in suburban Perth.

Lorraine enrolled in the NOW program in 1986. She was seeking "direction" and a means of overcoming her sense of being "dumb" in comparison to her clever well-educated children. "NOW made me accept that I am as good as anyone", said Lorraine. "It made my brain start to work."

The sharing of experiences was also important. Lorraine learned that many other women had left school early and had faced hardships. This included her lecturers who represented positive role models of what women can achieve in spite of the disadvantages they face. "It made me realize that most women lack confidence", she said. "What makes the difference is to step forward despite self doubts."

And Lorraine did step forward with courage. She completed sub-leaving English and Mathematics, followed by TEE (Tertiary Entry Exam), and is currently a part-time university student. At the same time, she has a casual cleaning job to supplement her Widow's Pension.

Lorraine hopes to complete her BA (Social Science) degree in 1993, leading to a position as a Welfare Worker. Her interest in this career became evident during the NOW course. "NOW helped me to decide my own thoughts and tastes", Lorraine said "It gave me a career goal". While she is very committed to this goal, Lorraine thinks that "learning along the way is what's important".

Phyllis (38) grew up on a farm in the Albany region, where she currently lives with her husband and 4 children (18, 11, 10 and 8). Being more interested in sport than academic pursuits, she left school at 16 to concentrate on coaching tennis and to work in the local telephone exchange. After a six year stay in Perth working as a hotel receptionist, during which time Phyllis (then 25) married, she and her husband moved back to the country and established their own farm.

Phyllis was persuaded by a girlfriend to enrol in the NOW course in 1987. She had no idea what it would be like but "just wanted something different to do." Like many women, Phyllis found the NOW course "a tremendous confidence booster". She discovered her flair for creative writing, receiving praise and recognition from the NOW group for her poetry. Encouragement to participate and be involved in the community was an important part of the course. "Our lecturer made us realize that we should get out into the world and do things", Phyllis said.

Along with four other women from the NOW program, Phyllis enrolled as a full-time student in the Diploma in Office and Secretarial Studies at the beginning of 1988. For years she had been thinking about further study but "felt too old" and that she "might make a fool of myself". "If I had not attended the NOW course", said Phyllis, "I would never have considered further studies at TAFE".

Phyllis is enjoying the Diploma course, achieving excellent results and participating fully in campus life. This year she is a member of the Student Council, thanks to the self-confidence

gained during the NOW program. "NOW made me not afraid to be involved, not afraid of public speaking", Phyllis said.

While Phyllis is very happy with the College, its facilities and its teachers, there are a few things about studying at TAFE that she would like to see improved: such as streamlining enrolment procedures (to avoid "long queues and confusion") and upgrading the audio and heating equipment. Because she lives a long way out of town, making travelling to college time consuming and costly, it would also suit Phyllis better if the course was compacted into two days rather than being spread over four.

Phyllis will complete the Certificate qualification at the end of this year, but plans to change her focus next year from Secretarial Studies to English to tie in with her career goal of short story writer.

Beryl (39) grew up in a small wheatbelt town, moving to Albany to complete her secondary education. She wanted to do tertiary studies but this would have meant living in Perth, a prospect Beryl's parents were not happy with. Instead she took an office job in the local town until marriage at the age of 21. Beryl has been separated for 5 years. She lives with her two children (12 and 8) in an outlying Perth suburb.

Beryl enrolled in the NOW program in 1986 during a period of "emotional turmoil" following her marriage breakdown. She felt "trapped into my little world with the kids" and saw the NOW course as the first step to re-entering the workforce. Beryl had been thinking about doing some kind of course but had been "holding back". "NOW helped me along the road to taking that step", she said. "It gave me the confidence and direction to get out and do it."

By the end of the NOW program, Beryl knew that she wanted to do further study. Doing typing and wordprocessing as part of the NOW course helped her to make a decision about her future area of study. She enrolled in the Diploma in Office and Secretarial Studies in 1986, completing it one year later. Beryl was very happy with her teachers, other students and the timing of classes. With some financial help from her family to supplement her widow's pension, Beryl managed to buy the necessary textbooks (usually second hand) and pay the course fee. (She did feel that the $35 fee could have been waived for people on low incomes).

Since graduating, Beryl has held casual and part-time administrative positions with local schools, and a clerical position in a small business. She hopes to secure regular part-time work at the local high school as this will fit in well with her responsibilities to her children as well as providing her with a regular income.

A career is some way off in the future. At the moment, says Beryl, "I have to put the children first because they only have one parent". Also, there is the possibility of remarriage and having another child in which case Beryl would be happy to shelve her plans for a career in favour of a relatively undemanding part-time job.

Whatever the future holds, the NOW program has been of immense value. "It helped me to be able to cope better with everything: my study, my work, my life", Beryl concluded.

Geraldine (30) was educated in Western Australia. After failing year 11 (academic) she completed a secretarial course and worked for a Building Society. At 19 she returned to school to attempt year 12 but had to withdraw because of a pregnancy-related illness. After marriage and children Geraldine held various odd jobs. For the past five years she has been a volunteer teacher at the local alternative school. Geraldine has recently separated from her husband and lives with her three children, currently aged 10, 9 and 4, in suburban Perth.

In 1985 Geraldine enrolled in the NOW course for "something to do". This was a "stressful time" with her husband away a lot and the youngest child only 18 months old. The NOW program gave Geraldine an insight into the career and study options available to her. "It was the beginning of finding myself ... putting my own life into perspective", she said. But at the end of the NOW course Geraldine was still unsure of her future direction and it was not until 2 years later that she enrolled in the Certificate in Welfare Studies.

Geraldine found this course unsatisfactory for a number of reasons and withdrew after one term. The lack of an on-campus child care facility meant "hassles with child care". Travel and parking in the city also presented a problem.

Geraldine was angered and upset by the attitude of her male psychology lecturer who "blamed the breakdown of society on women going outside the home". She found it difficult to cope with the (unexpected) extra workload imposed by the requirement to do a communications subject to compensate for her lack of year 12. She was also dissatisfied with the library facilities upon which she was heavily reliant due to her inability to buy books. (The family was existing on Geraldine's Unemployment Benefit and her husband's TEAS allowance).

Despite these setbacks Geraldine has firm plans to qualify as a developmental teacher and has applied for entry to Murdoch University for this purpose. She has a satisfying part-time job as a Family Resource Worker. NOW has helped her to provide effective support to single parents by "making me aware of people's emotional needs".

Jennifer (37) grew up in Perth. After completing year 12 she wanted to join the army but, faced with her father's opposition did nursing instead. After one year she left nursing to get married. Immediately after marriage at 18, Jennifer did shop and office work but has not had paid employment since her children were born. She has two sons aged 14 and 15, and separated from her husband in 1987, two weeks before commencing in the NOW program.

Jennifer heard about the NOW course from a friend who lectures at the local TAFE college. She hoped that doing the course would boost her self-confidence. The NOW course introduced her to laboratory work and as a result of this exposure, Jennifer went on to enrol in the Certificate of Laboratory Practice. After completing this at the end of 1989, she plans to study part-time to gain her Diploma.

"All this has really only been possible with the confidence I got from the NOW program and the support of the people I have met through it", Jennifer said. These people include the science lecturers who Jennifer met while doing the "hands on" component of the NOW course. These teachers (all male) have been very supportive, monitor Jennifer's progress, have faith in her ability, and "give her a push" when needed.

Jennifer's career goal is to work in the area of forensic medicine as a Laborary Technician.

Dawn has lived in Geraldton for most of her 36 years. After leaving school at 16, she worked in a newsagency for two years. Dawn happily swapped this "mundane" job for marriage and motherhood, spending the next eighteen years raising two children.

She head about the NOW program from her husband who was working at the time at the local TAFE college. With her two teenagers at school and not knowing anyone in her new suburb, Dawn "couldn't face staying at home". She wanted "to get away from full-time housework" and to meet people. Dawn is now part of a supportive network of friends who completed the program together.

She has also gained a secretarial qualification. "The NOW programme was just the beginning to improving my skills", Dawn said. "It encouraged me to make up my mind about something, to follow up an idea I'd had for a long time."

Dawn was a little nervous about the English and Maths test she had to sit to gain entry to the Certificate in Office and Secretarial Studies. This was the first test since leaving school but NOW had given her the confidence to give it a go. Dawn passed the test, gained her Certificate and is currently attending evening classes to enhance her skills.

The Certificate year was hard work, but for Dawn reaching her goal was well worth the effort. Having done the NOW course made things easier. She was familiar with the campus and had been gently eased into "sitting behind a desk and being taught" for the first time in 20 years.

After gaining her Certificate, Dawn looked for an office job but was hindered by her lack of recent work experience. The breakthrough came after she did some voluntary work for the Skin Cancer Research Program. This experience gained her a relief position at the local hospital. Dawn copes well with her demanding job on casualty reception. Assertion skills acquired during NOW helped her through the early days in dealing with "put downs" from more experienced employees.

Dawn is keen to swap her casual job for one with regular hours and income. Now she has a foot in the door, Dawn's job prospects look much brighter.

Catherine (37) is a single parent of two children aged 12 and 18. She completed her 0 levels in the UK and at the age of 19 emigrated to Australia with her one year old daughter.

Catherine held a variety of clerical jobs in Victoria and Tasmania. She moved from job to job in search of more responsibility but found that, irrespective of ability, "women get stuck at a certain level, in mundane jobs".

After the birth of her son, Catherine swapped paid for volunteer work which she continued after moving to Perth in 1978. This included teaching dancing, helping to set up a learning centre, and serving on Parents and Citizens groups.

When the NOW program was advertised, Catherine saw it as "the first step" back into the paid workforce. She had always wanted to study accounting but needed "to know that it was possible". Doing the NOW course confirmed this career choice. "I came to terms with my own values and abilities", said Catherine.

She is the top student in her Accounting class and a member of the National Institute of Accountants. After completing her three year Diploma in a few months time, Catherine plans to join her daughter in studying for a Bachelor of Business at Curtin University.

As a single parent pensioner, Catherine has had to overcome some financial hurdles, in particular the purchase of expensive textbooks. Her determination to reach her career goal has also entailed putting up with a litany of "sexist comments and put down jokes", as well as a sexual proposition, from a male lecturer. No complaint was made as Catherine did not expect to be supported. She did not know the identity of the Women's Liaison Officer and commented that the counselling service had a low profile on campus.

Christine (29) is married and has a 9 month old son. As a soldier's daughter, she attended schools in three states, finally matriculating and qualifying as a primary teacher in Victoria. After six years, feeling that the pressure of teaching was too great, Chris left the profession. Shortly afterwards she moved to Perth with her husband.

Hoping to get to know other women in the area and to regain her lost self-confidence, Chris joined

the local NOW program in 1986. Staff and students were very supportive so that by the end of the program she felt ready to tackle other courses. "I thought I can't do anything, I'm just a teacher", Chris recalled. "But the NOW program rebuilt my self-confidence and helped me expand on the abilities I had."

Along with other NOW graduates, Chris was encouraged by the college to enrol in a typing course followed by "Introduction to Computers". This subject is part of a Diploma course, however, because the college was offering it to women only, accreditation was initially refused. TAFE's argument, explained Chris, was that it was "only a course to keep women busy" and that "women would not follow through". Fortunately, the college Principal successfully fought to have this decision reversed.

Christine's move to an outer Perth suburb meant that she completed the second subject of the Diploma at a different college. However, she withdrew halfway through the third computing subject due to lack of support from a male lecturer who Chris feels did not take women students seriously. The small number of male students received a disproportionate amount of the lecturer's attention. "He would spend more time answering their questions and explaining points", said Chris. "He explained things to the men but did things for the women so that we didn't ever learn how to correct the problem."

The lecturer also discriminated in his use of language, employing complex technical terms with the male students but simple non-technical words with the female students. "He treated us as if we were a bit thick", Chris recalled.

As a result, Chris found that she was not getting any value from the class and the little bit of knowledge she acquired was from her own reading. The possibility of discussing the problem with an on-campus counsellor was not considered; classes were held in the evening (at this college only full-time courses are available during the day) at a time when student services were neither available nor visible.

Since doing the NOW course Chris has worked part-time as a census collector and for TAFE as a Clerical Officer, a Research Officer and as a Computing teacher.

CHAPTER 5 - WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TAFE : FILLING THE GAPS

5.1 Introduction

The available research into the New Opportunities for Women programs conducted throughout Australia confirms what lecturers and others involved in the program were well aware of: NOW courses are an important access point to vocational education and paid employment for mature-age women. However, many women have not had the opportunity to participate in a NOW course or its equivalent.

Women's access courses are not offered in all states and territories. A recent report from TAFE, Northern Territory, comments that the lack of formal access courses "is limiting the potential for many women to fully participate in tertiary education initiatives in the Territory" (NT TAFE, Report to the twelfth meeting of the National Working Party of Women's Advisers in TAFE, March 1988).

In states that do offer women's access courses, there is unmet demand - either existing courses are over-subscribed, or courses are not offered in all areas on a regular basis. Unmet demand statistics collected in NSW reveal that in the metropolitan area demand exceeds available places by an average of 10 per course, and in country areas by an average of 18 per course (NSW TAFE, Report to the twelfth meeting of the National Working Party of Women's Advisers in TAFE, March 1988). In the ACT, waiting lists of up to 25 women were common until the introduction of fees in 1988 (verbal advice, Equal Opportunity Officer, Canberra College of TAFE). In South Australia, course provision has been ad hoc, with only one college offering NOW on a regular basis (veral advice, Women's Adviser, SA TAFE).

Rural women in all states have limited and irregular access to NOW courses. The barriers to participation, faced by Aboriginal and NESB women are compounded if they live in isolated rural communities.

Several TAFE Women's Advisers also drew attention to the "hidden demand" from women whose childcare commitments or socio-economic situation precludes them from participating in access courses. Recent changes in the ACT illustrate the latter: since the introduction of fees, NOW courses are under-subscribed because women from low socio-economic groups can no longer afford them. The introduction of fees could also be expected to disadvantage other women who, while not usually categorized as "poor", lack access to cash. These include farming women and many married women who do not have an independent income.

NOW courses are assisting thousands of women to negotiate the transition from the home to the TAFE campus, however, in the words of one Women's Access Co-ordinator, "we are dealing with the tip of the iceberg." The remainder of this section presents a discussion of the gaps in access in relation to particular groups of women.

5.2 Women with Childcare Responsibilities

5.2.1 General

The Pocock report (1987, Vol. 2:49-57) identifies the unavailability of childcare as the major barrier to women's participation in TAFE.

Some of the largest TAFE campuses in Australia - Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane - still do not have on-campus facilities. This situation exacerbates the existing educational, social and economic disadvantages faced by Aboriginal women, women of non-English speaking backgrounds, sole parents, women on low incomes, and isolated women.

Surveys of child care needs in Victoria (EO Branch 1986), NSW (Cox 1983) and WA (Martin 1988) have documented the repercussions of a lack of affordable, conveniently-located care. These include non-entry to TAFE; postponement of studies; limitations on choice of college, course and subjects (eg hobby and leisure courses because these fit the times when care is available); inability to study in the preferred mode (ie opt for part-time and evening when full-time is preferred); poor progress because of stress and/or time-consuming child care arrangements; and, withdrawal from courses.

A further important issue, highlighted by an ex-NOW student interviewed for the current survey, is that of timetabling (see Margaret's story, Section 4.8). Women with responsibilities for school-age children experience great difficulties in attending classes which clash with the times of taking children to school (early morning) and picking them up again (late afternoon). A different type of problem was described by a Student Union in its submission to the Pocock inquiry (1987, Vol.2:53-4): student mothers who are faced with the problem of re-arranging childcare in response to last minute timetable alterations often have to withdraw from units in which they are enrolled.

The Pocock report notes that, despite widespread acknowledgement of the importance of childcare, the level of provision and funding in TAFE remains low. In 1985, approximately 30 out of

196 TAFE colleges in Australia provided a total of 663 on-campus child care places. A further 13 colleges (in NSW, Victoria and SA) made other arrangements such as the provision of fee subsidies (it should be noted, however, that the effectiveness of this arrangement is often undermined by the limited availability of community-based childcare). Three quarters of TAFE colleges were without any form of child care (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2 : Table 6.1).

The gap between the recognition of need and the provision of services is a function of competing priorities in a climate of resource constraint. However, '<u>the establishment of particular courses for women, without a complementary provision of child care, may not be an efficient utilization of resources</u>' (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2:49; emphasis added).

In her review of child care in TAFE in WA, Jenny Martin (1988: 3-7) recommends a number of ways in which TAFE authorities can maximize access to federal funding, and a range of strategies to maintain and develop student child care facilities. These include: the use of demountables; the use of mobile childcare to provide for sessional and outreach needs; the inclusion of on-campus centres in all future colleges/capital works (including country colleges); encouragement of country colleges to access federal funding for multi-functional community based provision; and, utilization of the Family Day Care pilot program to provide for existing unmet demand and to monitor future demand.

5.2.2 <u>Women's Access Courses</u>

The timetabling of NOW and similar access courses during school hours is a strategy that specifically recognizes, and responds to, women's family commitments. Nevertheless, it does little to circumvent the educational barriers faced by women with <u>pre-school</u> children. This group accounted for less than a quarter of enrolments in both the NSW (Rawsthorne 1988) and WA surveys (Appendix 3 of this report). It is likely that mothers of small children decide against participation in access courses because of child care difficulties. Participation depends upon the availability of on-campus facilities, family support, community-based care, or the ability to afford private day care. All too often, none of these is available.

5.3 Sole Parents

5.3.1 General

While no data are available on the participation in TAFE of sole parents, it could be assumed (on the basis of the childcare issues discussed in 5.2 above) that this group is under-represented. This assumption is supported by a recent survey (Frey:1986) of workforce barriers which found that 75 percent of sole parents anticipated difficulties, mostly childcare related, in improving their vocational skills. The grim situation faced by many sole parents studying at TAFE is exemplified by the following account from a TAFE Counsellor (Martin 1988: Appendix 16).

> Full-time student (migrant), separated with pre-school child. No contact with husband, no other family in Australia. Under some stress with problems associated with low income, lack of support and also very tired by the time gets home and falling behind with homework.
>
> Discussion found student leaving home with child just after 7 am, taking bus to nearby suburb, walking to child care centre .... then back to bus and college by just before 9 am, and in reverse at end of classes.

This example illustrates the combination of disadvantages faced by sole mothers in particular: low income, lack of support from spouse, unavailability of conveniently located child care and, in this case, cultural and social isolation.

In an effort to alleviate the welfare dependence and associated poverty of sole parents (the overwhelming majority of whom are women), the Federal Government has announced the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program which will commence early in 1989. Under the program, sole parents will be encouraged and assisted to undertake vocational training as preparation for workforce re-entry. TAFE is expected to be the main provider of such training.

Assistance with childcare - in the form of subsidies for approved care - will be provided (CES Manual Vol. 7, Annexe J). However, the effectiveness of this policy has been undermined by the limited availability of community-based care. This shortage has meant that the childcare budget for sole parents undertaking DEET courses has remained largely unspent. Recent changes are designed to rectify this situation.

It is TAFE policy to give priority to sole parents in the allocation of on-campus childcare places. Yet, unless the number of places is increased, this will be at the expense of married mothers. It cannot be stressed enough that universally available childcare is essential if all women are to have access to a sufficient range of education and training opportunities to enable them to share in the "reskilling" of the Australian workforce.

5.3.2 Women's Access Courses

Of the respondents to the current study, forty-six (15 percent) were sole parents and nine of these had pre-school children. Single mothers experience the same impediments to participation in NOW courses as do mothers of small children in general (see Section 5.2.2).

Under the JET program, the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) will fund re-entry or preparatory programs for sole parents. Such programs have already been introduced in most states in response to the 1987 changes to pension eligibility (see 3.2). Preparatory programs are designed to link into short occupation-specific courses (also DEET-funded), and to also facilitate access to mainstream award courses.

As is the case with DEET-funded vocational courses, TAFE can expect to be a provider of preparatory training for this group and for other CES clients who are identified as disadvantaged. Because of its expertise and experience in the provision of NOW courses, together with its extensive resources and decentralized college structure, TAFE is well equipped to deliver preparatory and vocational courses for sole parents. As the sole parent program gains momentum, it can be expected to have resource implications for TAFE. These are canvassed in Chapter 6.

5.4 Rural Women

5.4.1 General

The educational barriers faced by rural people have been well-documented (Clarke 1987; Department of Primary Industries and Energy 1988). These include lack of information; distance and isolation, combined with the high cost of petrol; heavy workload; and, the limited availability of courses in the external mode.

For women, these barriers are exacerbated by domestic responsibilities, commitments to young children, and low self-confidence. Rural women are much less likely than rural men to undertake external studies. For example, in 1986, women accounted for less than five percent of total enrolments in Certificate courses offered through the NSW External Studies College. In 1988 in Western Australia, rural men enrolled in TAFE external studies outnumbered rural women by more than two to one (Mageean 1988 : 46).

Women are particularly affected by the problems of physical distance from college. Some women do not drive, or do not have access to a car. A study of isolated rural women's access to TAFE (Mageean 1988) reports that even if women do have transport, many are disinclined to drive long distances over isolated roads to attend evening classes.

Family and farming responsibilities, combined with the high cost of petrol, mean that isolated rural women are precluded from, or experience difficulties with, courses that require daily attendance at college or are spread over a long period. Several respondents to an earlier survey of WA country women (Brady 1987:14-15) expressed the need for short, intensive courses with classes timetabled to take account of the rural lifestyle. This issue was also raised by a respondent to the current survey who is currently completing a TAFE Diploma course (see Phyllis' story, Section 4.8).

The Mageean report (1988) draws attention to the multiple disadvantages faced by isolated rural women with special needs. These include women of non-English speaking backgrounds, single mothers, Aboriginal women, unemployed women, and disabled women.

Rural women have consistently identified lack of and over-subscribed childcare facilities as a major study barrier (Clark 1987; Mageean 1988). As a consequence, rural women who have pre-school children rarely participate in post-secondary education (Mageean 1988:13).

The combination of barriers faced by rural women is encapsulated in the following statement from a respondent to the current survey:

> Having been at home I have fallen behind the technological advances for both my previous jobs (journalism and nursing), but can't afford the travel, the fees, books and the childcare to retrain."

Against this background of inadequate access, rural women have an increasing and urgent need for vocational education. The downturn in the rural economy has prompted many farming women to seek outside employment. For women who have been absent from the workforce for long periods, access to refresher and other vocational courses is important. At the same time, women's increasing role in farm management creates the need for access to business, accounting and computing courses (Working Party on Post-Secondary Rural Education 1987:19). It would be ironic if the imposition of course fees militated against rural women's access to TAFE Preparatory and Vocational programmes at the very time that access is so crucial.

5.4.2 Women's Access Courses

The mainstream course offerings outlined above may not be the most appropriate starting point for rural women who do not feel confident about their ability to work or study, or who have a low basic standard of education. In recognition of this, the Working Party on Post-Secondary Rural Education (1987) recommended that priority be given to the provision of confidence-building and self-esteem courses for women.

NOW and other women's access courses have already gone some way towards redressing the disadvantaged position of rural women (see 3.2). Participation in NOW has alleviated their "information starvation", and given rural women the opportunity to discover their own talents and interests.

NOW and similar programs have been made available to rural women in their own communities. In the Mt Gambier region of SA, NOW has been delivered as an outreach program through the network of TAFE-operated, community-based learning centres. Expansion to other regions is planned. A further example of TAFE bringing its courses to rural women is the co-operative arrangement in Victoria between Yallourne College and the Morwell Neighbourhood House. In WA, some units of the NOW course are offered to women in 7 small country towns which do not have a TAFE college. Local schools and community halls are used, with locally-recruited teachers being trained and resourced by the Women's Interests Unit.

The Distance INTO course in NSW (developed and delivered by the Women's Co-ordination Unit in conjunction with various schools in NSW TAFE) is an example of innovative distance education in non-traditional areas.

If the educational needs of rural women are to be adequately met, TAFE authorities must explore ways of expanding the existing delivery of outreach programs. Mageean (1988:33-50) describes several successful models which could be taken up by TAFE on a wider scale.

5.5 Women of a Non-English Speaking Background

5.5.1 General

TAFE authorities generally do not publish, or collect, data about the ethnicity of students. However, information gathered by the New South Wales Department of TAFE 'suggests that participation of persons of non-English speaking backgrounds in TAFE is disproportionately low' (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2:33). In that state, less than 10 percent of the total student population spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, around half were women. As is the case with enrolments in general (see 3.1), women were more likely than men to be in "special" courses and less likely to be in trade and advanced level courses.

Courses conducted specifically for people of non-English speaking backgrounds seek to overcome the cultural and language barriers which underlie this low level of participation in TAFE. Information collected from four states by Pocock (1987 Vol. 2:35) indicates that women's share of enrolments in these courses is generally around fifty percent.

5.5.2 Women's Access Courses

NOW courses for women of non-English speaking backgrounds are offered in four states but in all cases their availability is limited.

In New South Wales, NOW (NESB) courses have been offered in six of the 93 colleges, however their availability will be reduced in 1989. In South Australia, Migrant NOW courses are offered in one of the 22 colleges, and in Western Australia two colleges out of 16. The number of locations at which courses are available in Victoria could not be ascertained, however, at least three colleges offer programs which are similar to those already mentioned.

The report of the first WA program expressed the rationale for these courses in the following way:

> Migrant women .... are, like Australian born women, likely to go through critical points in their lives when they are considering options for the future. For non-English speaking background women, the critical factors .... are learning English and exploring their position and options in Australian society. (Stretton 1986:1).

These programs have been highly successful in assisting women to overcome the dual barriers of gender and culture. For example, the NSW follow-up of students from the NOW (NESB) program found that six months after the course less than 10 percent had no plans; 65 percent had pursued further study and 36 percent had (re)entered the workforce (Rawsthorne 1988, 6.7). Similarly, over 80 percent of women who completed the vocational English course for Migrant Women at Flagstaff College (Victoria) during 1987 and 1988 went on to employment or specific vocational training (Thompson 1988).

While these courses have been successful, they have not been accessible to all women of non-English speaking backgrounds. Course provision is limited in each state to the capital city and, in the case of NSW, to large regional centres. Even for women who live in these areas, financial, transport and childcare problems may preclude their participation, or at the least create considerable difficulties for those who do enrol in a course. For respondents to the NSW evaluation (Rawsthorne 1988:6.5), the extra expenditure required to attend the course put a strain on low or unstable incomes. Their reliance on often poor public transport meant that travel to class was time-consuming; this added to the problems that women faced in combining study with domestic responsibilities. The proposed reduction in the number of colleges offering the NOW (NESB) course could be expected to exacerbate this situation.

Through the central location of courses in WA, and their proximity to relatively well-serviced transport routes, the travel-related problems experienced by many of the women undertaking NOW (NESB) courses in NSW have largely been avoided. However, Migrant NOW courses in WA are regularly over-subscribed, which suggests that demand is not currently being met.

Although NESB women in Western Australia derived great benefit from the language component of the NOW course, language difficulties persisted for

many (Stretton 1986). For respondents to the NSW evaluation, these difficulties related to both pronunciation and meaning (Rawsthorne 1988). It is not surprising then, that 44 percent of ex-students in NSW enrolled in further English courses. On the other hand, reports from both NSW (1988) and WA (1986) note that even women who are proficient English speakers and who feel able to cope with mainstream courses choose instead to "consolidate" their language skills. Course co-ordinators in New South Wales believed that the students' lack of confidence in their language skills stemmed from the barrage of English tests which many had faced in the past and was reinforced by the racist attitudes of listeners. (Rawsthorne 1988:6.6).

The cultural and linguistic problems faced by women of a non-English speaking background who undertake TAFE vocational courses were highlighted by an ex-NOW student (first language Spanish) enrolled in the Certificate of Welfare Studies (see Licinia's story, Section 4.8). As the sole parent of a pre-school child, this woman found it difficult to devote enough time to her study. Because she was constantly grappling with the meaning of words, essays took longer to complete. Although progressing well, she expressed frustration with her ongoing comprehension difficulties. Teachers were friendly and sympathetic but seemed not to fully appreciate what a struggle study was for her. This highlights the need for support services (personal counselling and tutorial assistance) for NESB students undertaking mainstream courses.

5.6 Aboriginal Women

5.6.1 General

Aboriginal participation in TAFE for both men and women is disproportionately low. The Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce (August 1988) notes that 1.6 percent of mature-age Aboriginals, compared with 5.7 percent of all Australians, participate in TAFE courses. Moreover, Aboriginal enrolments are concentrated in non-award courses. There is no statistical information on TAFE participation by gender. However, it does appear that Aboriginal women, like the female student population as a whole, are concentrated in traditionally female areas. (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2:35).

5.6.2 Women's Access Courses

In an attempt to cater for Aboriginal needs, TAFE authorities have done so largely through specially-designed programs (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education 1985:162). With the exception of WA where Aboriginal women's share of enrolments in these programs is around 80 percent (Heaney 1988:8), male-female participation rates are roughly equal (Pocock 1987, Vol. 2:36). While these courses are generally open to both sexes, in practice the self-selection process means that Aboriginal men do trades and technical-type courses while Aboriginal women undertake courses in "cottage industry" fields.

In New South Wales, TAFE has offered a special NOW course for Aboriginal women. The course 'took into account the economic, political and social disadvantage of Aboriginal people' (Rawsthorne 1988:7.3). Aboriginal Studies was included as a core module, and Aboriginal teachers provided positive role models. Three colleges offered the program; in each case the course was designed in consultation with the local Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal women who participated in the courses shared common experiences and problems with other NOW students, however, there were significant differences. The NOW (Aboriginal) participants had received the least formal education, were more likely to be social security recipients, were younger than other NOW students, and had larger families with younger children. They were the highest users of informal child care, and the erratic attendance of some women can be attributed to the unreliability of these arrangements. The limited use of formal child care was associated with prohibitive factors such as cost, availability and cultural appropriateness.

The practical difficulties faced by Aboriginal students in completing the NOW course - poverty, poor health, childcare, crowded living arrangements, and travel difficulties - also militate against their participation in mainstream courses. While an 18-week NOW course could not compensate for the educational, social and economic disadvantages faced by Aboriginal women, 'it began the process' (Rawsthorne 1988:7.11). The students reported increased self-confidence, a perception of themselves as better educated, an enhanced awareness of the

labour market, and better communication skills. On completion of the NOW course, almost 90 percent of the women planned to enter or re-enter education, training or employment, with clerical and child care courses forming the bulk of student study plans. 'These can be viewed as aspirations to enter areas historically not accessible to Aboriginal women'. (Rawsthorne 1988:7.6).

It appears that Aboriginal women do not participate in regular NOW courses. Only five percent of the NSW NOW (Base) participants identified themselves as Aboriginal (the majority of these are likely to have been in joint NOW (Base) and NOW (Aboriginal) courses), and in the current survey there are no Aboriginal respondents. Those involved with the administration and teaching of NOW in WA report that Aboriginal women rarely, if ever, enrol (verbal advice, TAFE Women's Interests Unit).

This situation can perhaps be partially attributed to a lack of publicity in Aboriginal communities. However, the results of the NSW evaluation suggest that the needs of Aboriginal women are best met by the provision of special NOW courses. In New South Wales, the positive experiences which students had were closely tied to the inclusion of culturally relevant material, and to the use of Aboriginal teachers. This is the rationale underlying the decision to offer an Aboriginal NOW course in Albany (South West Region, WA) in 1989.

5.7 Disabled Women

5.7.1 General

TAFE is a major provider of training for the disabled, through both regular and special courses. Unfortunately, detailed information about the participation of disabled people in Australian TAFE is unavailable.

For disabled people, entry to TAFE and successful completion of a TAFE course is contingent upon a number of things: physical access; transport; appropriate venue, timetabling and enrolment arrangements; specially trained teachers; and, a positive and supportive campus environment.

The Women's Interests Unit of TAFE (WA) has highlighted several issues that relate specifically to women with disabilities. Physically disabled women who are economically

dependent may be unable to afford the special transport needed to attend TAFE colleges; these women may require special support such as toilet attendant care; they may be perceived as "powerless" and be more at risk of sexual harassment; they are more likely than disabled men to lack confidence; and, negative attitudes towards the disabled, when combined with sexist perceptions of women's role, are likely to result in the student being discouraged (either directly or indirectly).

5.7.2 Women's Access Courses

With the exception of the current survey, no data on the participation of disabled women in access courses have been collected. Unless special provisions have been made - as was the case in NSW for deaf women (not currently being offered) - it could be expected that disabled women are under-represented. Sixteen respondents (5.4%) to the current survey indicated that they had a disability; twelve of these were physically disabled (see Appendix 3, Table 6).

The question of whether preparatory training for disabled women is best delivered through a special NOW course or as part of the regular NOW program is one which must be considered within the broader debate over separation versus integration. Clearly, "normalization" has many advantages for disabled students. On the other hand, special courses are sometimes the most effective means of meeting educational needs. This was the case, for example, with the NOW course for deaf women which has run in the past in NSW.

Given the low self-confidence and self-esteem experienced by many disabled women, it is important that they be able to participate in NOW courses. How this is to be achieved will be for the relevant policy and program delivery areas of TAFE to decide, in consultation with disabled women and their advocates.

5.8 **Socially Disadvantaged Women**

5.8.1 General

For some women, many of the problems and disadvantages outlined above are compounded by other factors. These include: teenage parenthood; very low educational achievement and associated poor levels of literacy and numeracy; extreme poverty, with its attendant housing and

transport problems; social isolation; and, poor personal skills. These women are likely to be clients of Community Welfare departments and to need high levels of support before they can even start to think about entering the education system.

5.8.2 Women's Access Courses

Since 1987, the Women's Interests Unit of TAFE (WA), in conjunction with the Department for Community Services, has co-ordinated a small number of pilot outreach or 'pre-NOW' courses. These cater for severely disadvantaged women who have not yet acquired the personal skills that would enable them to enrol in a regular NOW course.

The Equal Opportunity Unit of TAFE (SA) reports that this group of women has been excluded from NOW courses in that state (verbal advice). NOW in SA is more structured than in other states and includes a relatively large component of mainstream subjects. While this arrangement has the advantage of establishing strong links with award courses, it is inappropriate to the needs of this particular group of women. This will also be the case with the NOW (Base) in NSW when it is 'mainstreamed' in 1989. In addition, the introduction of fees ($50 per semester) in that state will preclude women from low socio-economic groups unless they are social security recipients (verbal advice NSW, TAFE Women's Adviser).

There appears to be a need for "pre-NOW" courses in all states and territories. These need not represent an extra demand on limited TAFE resources. Additional funding sources, in particular Community Services Departments, should be investigated and utilized wherever possible. It would be appropriate for TAFE to adopt an advisory or co-ordinating role, at least in the early stages of such a program.

5.9 **Women in Prison**

Contemporary approaches to prisoner rehabilitation recognize the importance of self-esteem and practical skills acquisition to the successful transition from prison to wider community life. Furthermore, this transition is considerably facilitated if inmates have been "slotted" into an outside learning institution prior to release (Harwood 1988:20).

Modified NOW courses have been offered in Women's prisons in two states, South Australia and Western Australia. The aim of these courses echoes that of the regular NOW program: to

> equip [....] women with the skills required to enable them to have greater choice, to enter or re-enter the workforce, vocational training or further training. (Harwood 1988:1).

Despite the incidents and problems encountered during the Bandyup (WA) program, the participants, lecturers and prison staff all felt that it had been worthwhile. Prisoners reported gains in self-esteem, self-confidence, awareness of their own abilities and interests, communication, personal presentation and familiarity with the labour market and education system. In common with students in the regular NOW program, the course 'allowed Bandyup inmates to considerably widen their perceptions of women's roles in today's society and introduced these women to the benefits of further education.' (Harwood 1988:20).

It is recommended that all TAFE authorities consider the ongoing provision of re-entry programs within their women's prisons. Studies conducted in Australia and overseas emphasize the importance of course delivery by an outside body which is seen as independent and as sympathetic to the educational needs of prisoners. As recommended by the NSW Taskforce on Women in Prison (1985) and demonstrated by the Beyond Bandyup Project (WA), the TAFE NOW program can play a significant role in bridging the gap between prison life and community re-entry. TAFE delivery of re-entry programs within prisons slots inmates into the mainstream education system and encourages them to acquire further vocational qualifications. This is not to suggest that such programs provide the solution to the complex set of difficulties faced by newly released prisoners. The need for ongoing social support is widely recognized; without appropriate support services, these women may not be able to maintain study commitments.

As was suggested in relation to Preparatory Courses for socially disadvantaged women (see 5.8.2), alternative funding sources should be explored and accessed wherever possible. A co-operative venture between Prisons Departments (financial and practical support) and TAFE authorities (expertise in curriculum design and program delivery) is recommended as an appropriate and effective means of making re-entry courses available to these disadvantaged women.

5.10 Long-Term Unemployed Women

DEET preparatory courses are designed to meet the labour market re-entry needs of sole parents, long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged women. However, because married women rarely register as unemployed with the CES, they are ineligible for these targetted programs and will continue to access NOW courses and the like. The data collected for the current survey indicates that the NOW students had experienced various lengths of workforce absence prior to enrolment. Moreover, it appears that longer-term unemployed women may continue to face difficulties in negotiating the job market. While NOW is primarily an education access program, its broader objective is to assist women to participate more fully in the public sphere, including the labour market. With this in mind, it may be timely to review women's access programs to ensure that they are meeting the needs of long-term unemployed women.

CHAPTER 6 : WOMEN'S ACCESS : ISSUES, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

6.1 Future Demand

Throughout Australia, there is considerable unmet and hidden demand from mature-age women for access to NOW and other bridging courses that will help them to negotiate the difficult re-entry process. The educational and training needs of these women, and their right to have those needs met within the public education system, presents a future challenge to TAFE, a challenge that cannot be ignored.

TAFE will also need to respond to Federal Government initiatives in the areas of employment and training which are designed to move people from welfare dependency to workforce participation. TAFE is already part of this trend; it has been involved in the design and delivery of short vocational and preparatory courses commissioned by DEET under its Jobtrain program for disadvantaged job-seekers. The introduction in early 1989 of the Jobs Education and Training (JET) program for sole parent pensioners will place greater demands on TAFE for expanded course provision.

It is imperative that TAFE continue to play a key role in the planning, design and delivery of DEET-funded courses. If TAFE's involvement was to diminish, the "slack" would be partially taken up by private providers. This privatization of training would be bad for women. The New South Wales Teachers Federation (May 1988) has noted that only publicly regulated and provided training ensures the necessary conditions for access by disadvantaged groups, control of standards, articulated programs and broad-based training.

6.2 Resources

Meeting the areas of demand briefly outlined above will have resource implications for TAFE in the areas of teaching, capital, equipment and recurrent resources, administrative and technical support, classroom space and allocation, and, access to common facilities.

Pocock (1987 VI:17-20) has noted that resource allocation to traditionally-female areas, including preparatory or access courses, is disproportionately low. Existing allocations cannot, therefore, be stretched to accommodate an expansion of women's access programs.

There is a need to review existing allocations to ensure that women's access programs are adequately resourced, and to adopt an innovative approach to the utilization of

external funding sources (see Recommendation 8). The latter arrangement is already well established in relation to DEET courses. In this way, TAFE's experience and expertise in program design and delivery, as well as its extensive college network, can be harnessed to the needs of particular client groups.

The problems of shortage of classroom space and pressure on common facilities also demand innovative solutions. A possible approach is the establishment of separate Women's Learning Centres as has occurred in several TAFE colleges in Victoria. This has the advantage of giving women's access courses a secure, supportive space, and avoids the frequent room changes which bedevil many college-based courses. However, the potential disadvantages must be borne in mind. Some considerations are that:

- College-based NOW courses provide students with an introduction to campus life so that adjustment problems are minimized for ex-students undertaking further study at TAFE.

- Separate buildings be conveniently located (in or adjacent to college grounds), and be fully resourced in terms of teachers, equipment, facilities and student services, especially child care. Women must not be shunted off to the local girl guide hall.

- NOW students not be seen as having less rights to college facilities than students undertaking award courses.

6.3 Childcare

Childcare is a pre-requisite to TAFE entry for many women. This is widely recognized within the system, with childcare centres generally being included in future building plans. Campus-based care is the preferred option but one which is costly and time-consuming to implement. Without losing sight of this long-term objective (all campuses to have a childcare centre), interim or short-term measures should be considered. These include the use of on-campus demountables, the negotiation of special arrangements with community-based centres to allocate childcare places to TAFE students (this may entail TAFE meeting any additional costs, as is the case in South Australia), the co-ordination of family day care schemes, and the provision of subsidies to low-income students who use community centres or home-based day care.

A flexible approach should be adopted to childcare provision in rural communities and other areas (eg inner city, outer suburban) where population size, or considerations of space and cost, prohibit the establishment of a permanent centre. In NSW, Victoria and WA, "mobile childcare" has enabled geographically and socially isolated women to participate in TAFE (Martin 1988: 10.2).

Additional costs associated with these arrangements, as well as the recurrent expenses of existing on-campus centres, can be offset by the utilization of external funding sources (see Recommendation 4).

It is imperative that all childcare arrangements in respect of TAFE students be culturally appropriate (Aboriginal and NESB students), cater for ages 0-6 years, provide concession rates for low income earners, and include sessional and occasional care.

6.4 Special Courses

In a number of states, special NOW or other access courses are provided for women who, for cultural, social or physical reasons, have been found to have a low level of participation in TAFE. The question of whether the re-entry **needs** of disabled, Aboriginal and migrant women are best met through participation in regular NOW courses ('integration'), or by the provision of special courses ('specialization)', requires extensive discussion within TAFE as well as consultation with relevant outside bodies and the women themselves.

It is acknowledged that, within the current climate of restraint in educational spending, the provision of special courses is likely to come under pressure. Nevertheless, the primary objective must remain the meeting of user needs. As was suggested in 6.2 above, the achievement of this objective could be enhanced through joint funding arrangements between TAFE and relevant organizations (government and non-government).

6.5 Accreditation and Articulation

The links between women's access courses, such as NOW, and TAFE award courses would be strengthened by the inclusion of mainstream subjects, as is the case with the NOW program in South Australia, or by the accreditation of existing NOW units such as will occur in Western Australia in 1989.

This has obvious advantages: credit transfers enable women to build on the NOW course in order to gain a recognized TAFE qualification.

The potential disadvantages are less obvious but need to be carefully considered before embarking upon the road to accreditation. The following points appear to be important:

- Accreditation of existing NOW units (eg bridging mathematics) must not undermine the philosophy and approach in which their success is grounded.

- Teachers of accredited subjects to have an appropriate background and an understanding of the position of women in society.

- Retention of a non-accredited core module in recognition of the fact that many women may not be ready to undertake accredited study.

- The NOW course (or equivalent) to provide practical preparation for examinations.

- NOW students enrolled in accredited subjects to retain the option of not being assessed.

- Continuous assessment, the compilation of portfolios, and self-assessment are valid methods which are less threatening than traditional examinations.

6.6 **Mainstreaming and Decentralization**

The conversion of NOW courses (or their equivalent) into mainstream Certificate courses, as will occur in NSW in 1989, takes the accreditation process one step further. The advantages are the same as those outlined in 6.5. In addition, women's access courses gain status, permanency and a sound funding base.

The areas of concern outlined above become more critical in relation to mainstreaming. It is important, at least in the early stages of mainstreaming, that Equal Opportunity Units (or their equivalent) in TAFE adopt a 'watching brief' to ensure that:

- The approach to women's re-entry education developed in the NOW program is retained.

- Colleges continue to offer courses on a regular basis.

- Flexibility in teacher recruitment is practised so that suitable people are not excluded because of lack of formal qualifications (this is particularly important in relation to Aboriginal and NESB women).

6.7 **Fees**

The introduction of course fees may be associated with mainstreaming, as is the case in NSW, or occur in relation to non-award NOW courses as in the ACT. Whatever the circumstances, it indirectly discriminates against women who are poor and/or lack an independent income. Since the imposition of fees in the ACT early in 1988, courses which once had long waiting lists are now barely full. The Equal Opportunity Officer at Canberra College of TAFE advises that women from low socio-economic areas are no longer enrolling. This trend is expected to occur in NSW in 1989.

The introduction of fees always hits hardest those who are already educationally disadvantaged, locking them into a vicious circle of poverty and dependency. Women in general have fewer financial resources than men, and are less likely to hold post-school qualifications. Even if

family income is high, women who are out of the workforce may not have access to money for their own education. Fees act as a disincentive to women's participation in re-entry courses. As such, they work against the overall objective of bringing women's participation in TAFE up to a position of equity with men.

6.8 Traditional Female Study Areas

The primary destination of graduates of women's access courses is, and is likely to remain for some time to come, further study in the traditional female fields of community services, library services, health and children's services, secretarial/clerical work, textiles and clothing, and home economics. The Pocock report (1987) notes that these study areas are characterised by inadequate physical, human and financial resources and by narrow course provision. The question that needs to be asked, then, is what opportunities are opening up to women as a result of NOW courses and the like? If women, including NOW graduates, are to have the chance of gaining higher level qualifications through study in traditional female fields, TAFE must, as a priority, review existing course provision and resourcing arrangements.

CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION

The recent focus on re-skilling Australia, together with initiatives designed to move sole parents from welfare recipiency to paid employment, brings into prominence the need for women to have access to the full range of training opportunities. This report is premised on the belief that skills formation strategies designed to re-skill Australia must address the re-skilling of "Rita".

Women will continue to look to TAFE to provide them with the necessary skills and qualifications to effect workforce re-entry. This report has argued that women's access courses, specifically the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) program, play a significant "bridging" role in this regard. These courses have succeeded in bridging the gap between, on the one hand, the private world of home and family and, on the other, the public world of education and employment. They have opened up new opportunities for women of varying age, marital status, social class and cultural background.

Two critical issues have been discussed in relation to women's access courses. Firstly, is course provision adequate and, secondly, what exactly do they lead to?

The inescapable conclusion is that many women are missing out on access courses because they are confined to the home with small children, live in isolated rural areas or in a State or Territory that does not offer courses, have a disability, are imprisoned, cannot afford course fees, or come from a non-English speaking background or Aboriginal culture.

The inadequate provision of childcare in TAFE affects women across the board, however, women who cannot afford commercial childcare fees are particularly disadvantaged. While the establishment of on-campus childcare centres is slowly increasing, lack of childcare remains a major barrier to women's participation in TAFE. Similarly, the scheduling of courses in the evenings and a lack of synchronization between TAFE and school holidays, as has occurred in Western Australia in 1989, effectively prevents many women with school-age children from participating in TAFE.

This report has noted a number of recent changes to women's access courses in TAFE and has highlighted the potential pitfalls that must be avoided. For example, while acknowledging that the accreditation of women's access courses will strengthen their links with mainstream study, it is emphasized that this must not be at the expense of the philosophy and practice underlying their success. The imposition of course fees is seen as a retrograde step that will further disadvantage women who already face considerable barriers to their participation in vocational education. TAFE authorities are, therefore, urged to continue to provide women's access courses on a non-fee basis.

If NOW and similar women's access courses have, as this report has argued, a role to play in the process of education and skills formation for women, the question "access to what?" must be asked. The fact that women progress, in the main, from access programs such as NOW to courses in traditional female areas is not, in itself, an unsatisfactory outcome. It does, however, highlight the need for these traditionally female study areas to be adequately resourced and to be re-structured so as to provide a pathway from entry level through to advanced courses.

These are some of the considerations that need to be taken into account as TAFE responds to the challenges presented by the re-shaping of Australia's education and training system. Gender equity has been placed on both government and union agendas, and is a goal that TAFE must also give a high priority to.

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APPENDICES

1 Questionnaire

2 Interview Format

3 Participant Profile Data, Tables 1 - 12

4 Course and Location Data, Tables 13 - 17

5 Outcomes Data, Tables 18 - 39

6 Impact on Participants Data, Tables 40 - 42

APPENDIX 1 : QUESTIONNAIRE

7313/87, 7197/79 JB:DN

JENNY BINNS

Dear NOW Graduate

NOW : AND THEN WHAT?

New Opportunities for Women (NOW) has been running through TAFE since 1984 and over two thousand women had enrolled in the programme up to 1987.

Four years down the track we are interested to find out about the kinds of activities women have been involved in since NOW. Things like whether NOW has led into further study or paid employment, and in what areas. How do women feel about these courses and jobs - are they worthwhile; what problems have been encountered? For the women who planned to get a paid job or enrol in further study but have not done so, what barriers stood in the way? And, how helpful was the NOW programme; how could it be improved?

The enclosed Questionnaire asks you for this kind of information. Your information is important to this study even if you left part way through the NOW programme. By completing the Questionnaire you will be helping TAFE to improve its educational services to women.

Please don't be put off by the length of the Questionnaire; you do not have to answer every question. It is divided into five parts. Part One is background information which everyone needs to complete. Part Two is completed only if you have had a paid job since the NOW programme. Part Three is completed only if you enrolled in further study since NOW. Part Four is completed if you have not done either of these things since NOW. Part Five is for your general comments. You will probably only answer questions from two parts of the Questionnaire, plus write some comments in Part Five if you wish.

2...

So that we can get a full picture of the employment and educational experiences that women have had since doing the NOW course, we would like to arrange a small number of informal interviews. If you are willing to be interviewed please record your contact details on the enclosed form and return it in the envelope with your completed Questionnaire.

All information received will be treated confidentially. Individuals will not be named in the final report.

We look forward to receiving your completed Questionnaire by Friday, 29 July 1988. If you use the enclosed Freepost envelope no postage stamp is required.

If you would like to discuss the Questionnaire or if you have any problems with it please give Jenny Binns a call on 420 4077.

Janet Pine

JANET PINE
SENIOR OFFICER
WOMEN'S INTERESTS UNIT
OFFICE OF TAFE

July 13, 1988

7313/87 JB:DN

JENNY BINNS

Dear NOW Graduate

NOW : AND THEN WHAT?

About two weeks ago we sent you a Questionnaire seeking information about your employment and study experiences since finishing the NOW programme.

Many completed Questionnaires have been returned but, as we did not ask women to identify themselves on the form, we are not able to tell who has replied. Therefore, this follow-up letter is being sent to everyone.

If you have replied already, thanks very much for your help. If you have not completed the Questionnaire yet we would like to remind you of how important it is. The information you give us will help TAFE to improve its educational services to women like yourself.

The survey results will only be useful if a majority of women reply. We would appreciate it very much if you could return your Questionnaire by Friday, 12 August, or earlier if possible. A spare copy of the Questionnaire and a Freepost envelope are enclosed.

If you have any problems with the form please contact Jenny straightaway on 420 4077.

Janet Pine

JANET PINE
SENIOR OFFICER
WOMEN'S INTERESTS UNIT
OFFICE OF TAFE

July 28, 1988

enc

PART 1 : BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most of the questions can be answered by placing a circle around the relevant number. For example, if you were single when you did NOW, you would answer the fifth question by placing a circle around the number 1.

In some cases you might need to circle more than one number. For example, you would answer question 3 by circling the number next to all of the NOW subjects you enrolled in.

Some questions, for example number two, ask you to give details. Please write your comments clearly in the space provided.

For Office Use

1 ( )
2 ( )
3 ( )
4 ( )

NOW PROGRAMME

1 Which year did you enrol in NOW? _____ 5 ( )

2 Where did you enrol in the NOW programme? (Please give location of TAFE College or other venue, eg. Balga, Wagin, Armadale, etc.) 6 ( ) 7 ( )

_____

3 What subjects did you enrol in? (Please circle all the relevant numbers)

(a) Assertiveness Training .....1 8 ( )
(b) Abilities & Aptitudes .....2 9 ( )
(c) Employment & Education .....3 10 ( )
(d) Personal Presentation .....4 11 ( )
(e) Non Traditional Opportunites .....5 12 ( )

4 Did you complete the NOW course? Yes.....1 13 ( )
No.....2

If NO, what was your reason for withdrawing? _____ 14 ( )

_____ 15 ( )

PERSONAL INFORMATION

5 What was your marital status when you enrolled in the NOW programme? 16 ( )

Single 1
Married (includes living with a partner) 2
Separated, divorced or widowed 3

6 What is your year of birth? _____ 17 ( ) 18 ( )

7 (a) How many dependent children did you have when you enrolled in NOW? _____ 19 ( ) 20 ( )

For Office Use

(b) How many of your children were under school age at that time? _____ 21 ( ) 22 ( )

8 Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? 23 ( )

Yes 1
No 2

9 Do you have a disability or impairment? Yes .....1 24 ( )
No 2

If YES, please give details: _____ 25 ( )

_____

_____

10 Is English the first language you spoke? Yes .....1 26 ( )
No 2

If NO, please indicate what your first language was: 27 ( )

_____ 28 ( )

PREVIOUS EDUCATION (PRIOR TO "NOW")

11 (a) How old were you when you left school? _____ 29 ( )

(b) What is the highest year of school you completed? 30 ( )

_____ 31 ( )

12 Which of the following courses did you complete in between leaving school and enrolling in the NOW programme? (Circle all that you have done)

(a) Achievement or Junior Certificate .....1 32 ( )
(b) Certificate of Secondary Education or Leaving Certificate .....2 33 ( )
(c) TAFE or Business College Certificate .....3 34 ( )
(d) Degree or Diploma (from University, WACAE or TAFE)...4 35 ( )
(e) Adult Education or hobby course .....5 36 ( )

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT (PRIOR TO "NOW")

13 Before enrolling in the NOW programme:

(a) How long was it since you had a paid job?

Worked while doing NOW 1
Less than 1 year .....2 37 ( )
1 to 5 years 3
6 to 10 years 4
More than 10 years 5
Never had paid employment 6

For Office

(b) What was the occupation of your last paid job (before NOW)? _____ 38 ( )
39 ( )
40 ( )
41 ( )

(c) Had you done any unpaid or voluntary work (before NOW)? 42 ( )

Yes 1
No 2

AFTER "NOW", THEN WHAT?

14 Since NOW have you:

(a) Had a paid job? Yes .....1 43 ( )
No 2

(b) Done unpaid (volunteer) work? Yes .....1 44 ( )
No 2

(c) Enrolled in further study? Yes .....1 45 ( )
No 2

(d) Looked for a paid job but been unsuccessful? 46 ( )
Yes 1
No 2

(e) Done full-time home duties? Yes .....1 47 ( )
No 2

If you have done anything else since NOW, please give details:

_____

Thank you for completing this part of the questionnaire

The remainder of the questionnaire is divided into 4 parts. You only need to answer the questions that apply to you. For most people this means answering the questions from one part only. But if you have had a paid job and done further study since finishing NOW, please complete both Part 2 (Employment) and Part 3 (Further Study).

In addition, Part 5 provides space for any comments you wish to make.

- If you have had a paid job since "NOW" (even if you are not currently employed) please go to Part 2, Question 15
- If you have done further study since "NOW" (even if you are not currently studying) please go to Part 3, Question 25
- If you did not do either of these, please go to Part 4, Question 38

PART 2 : PAID EMPLOYMENT SINCE "NOW"

For Office Use

15 Please give details below of your employment history since finishing NOW. If you have had only one job since NOW, please record the details in the column for "Present/ Most Recent Job".

	FIRST JOB AFTER NOW	PRESENT OR MOST RECENT JOB	For Office Use
(a) Job Title			48 ( )
(b) Is/was this work full-time, part-time or casual?			49 ( ) 50 ( ) 51 ( ) 52 ( ) 53 ( ) 54 ( ) 55 ( ) 56 ( ) 57 ( ) 58 ( ) 59 ( )
(c) Brief description of type of work (eg. selling hardware, hotel reception, salaries clerk)			
(d) Duration of employment (please give month/year)	From ..... To	From ..... To	

16 What was the length of time between finishing NOW and starting your first paid job? 60 ( )

Already employed 1
1 month or less 2
2-5 months 3
6-12 months 4
More than a year 5

17 How many jobs, including your current job, have you had since finishing NOW?

Number of full-time jobs : _____ 61 ( )
Number of part-time jobs : _____ 62 ( )
Number of casual or temporary jobs : _____ 63 ( )

For Office Use

18 Thinking over the different things about your present/most recent job - the work, your boss, the pay, the hours, career prospects, training - how satisfied are/were you with the job as a whole?

Very satisfied .....1)
Satisfied .....2) **Please go to Question 20**
No opinion/not sure .....3)

64 ( )

A little dissatisfied .....4)
Very dissatisfied .....5) **Please go to Question 19**

19 What aspects of the job are/were you dissatisfied with (Please circle all the things you are/were dissatisfied with)

(a) type of work .....1 — 65 ( )
(b) the boss .....2 — 66 ( )
(c) hours of work .....3 — 67 ( )
(d) pay .....4 — 68 ( )
(e) training .....5 — 69 ( )
(f) career prospects .....6 — 70 ( )

20 Is your present/most recent job what you planned to do at the time the NOW course finished? — 71 ( )

Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 3

EFFECT OF "NOW" ON PAID EMPLOYMENT

21 How important was what you learned on the NOW programme in obtaining a paid job? — 72 ( )

Very important 1
Important 2
No opinion/not sure 3
Unimportant 4

22 What aspects of the NOW programme were helpful? (Please circle all the helpful aspects)

(a) Careers Information .....1 — 73 ( )
(b) How and where to look for a job .....2 — 74 ( )
(c) Completing job application forms and letters....3 — 75 ( )
(d) Using the CES and Situations Vacant columns.....4 — 76 ( )
(e) Job Interview skills .....5 — 77 ( )
(f) Confidence building and assertiveness training..6 — 78 ( )
(g) Decision making .....7 — 79 ( )

80 (1)

For Office Use Record 2

23 Do you think that NOW could have done more to assist you to pursue a career of your choice? Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 3

1 ( )

If YES, please give your ideas :

2 ( )

_____

3 ( )

_____

STUDY

24 Do you plan to study within the next year? Yes 1
No 2

4 ( )

- If you have enrolled in further study since "NOW" please go to Question 25.
- If you have not enrolled in further study there are no more questions. However, you may like to make some comments about the NOW programme or your experiences since NOW - Part 5 provides space for your comments.

PART 3 : FURTHER STUDY SINCE "NOW"

For Office Use

25 Please give details below of the first course you enrolled in since finishing NOW, and your current or most recent course of study. If you have enrolled in only one course since NOW, please record the details in the column for "Current or Most Recent Course".
NB: Training Institution means TAFE, WACAE, Murdoch, Curtin, University of WA, Canning and Tuart Senior Colleges, or a private college.

	FIRST COURSE SINCE NOW	CURRENT OR MOST RECENT COURSE
(a) Full Title of Course eg. Diploma in Office & Secretarial Studies.		
(b) Major subject(s) or branch of study		
(c) Training Institution		
(d) Is/was the course full-time or part-time?		
(e) Duration of course (please give month/year)	From ..... To	From ..... To .....
(f) Have you completed the course?		

5 ( )
6 ( )
7 ( )
8 ( )
9 ( )
10 ( )
11 ( )
12 ( )
13 ( )
14 ( )
15 ( )
16 ( )
17 ( )
18 ( )

26 What was the length of time between finishing NOW and starting your first course of further study?

19 ( )

1 month or less 1
2-5 months 2
6-12 months 3
More than a year 4

For Office Use

27 If you are not currently studying, do you plan to study within the next year? Yes .....1 No .....2 — 20 ( )

28 How many courses, including your current one, have you enrolled in since completing NOW?

Number of full-time courses: _____ — 21 ( )
Number of part-time courses: _____ — 22 ( )

29 Did you have a paid job while you were doing any of these courses? Yes .....1 No .....2 — 23 ( )

30 If you have enrolled in more than one course since NOW, did the earlier course lead into a later more advanced course? eg. A Certificate course followed by a Diploma or Degree course.

Yes .....1 — 24 ( )
No 2

- **If you have enrolled in a TAFE course since doing "NOW"** — **Please go to Question 31**
- **If you have not enrolled in a TAFE course since the "NOW" programme** — **Please go to Question 35**

FURTHER STUDY AT TAFE

31 If you commenced a TAFE course after doing the NOW programme, please indicate how you felt about different aspects of the course (or courses) by circling the relevant number below. For each item please circle one number only.

(a) Atmosphere

Friendly .....1 — 25 ( )
A bit intimidating 2
Scary/Unfriendly 3

(b) Course Structure

Informal .....1 — 26 ( )
More formal than NOW 2
Very formal 3

For Office Use

(c) Teaching Staff

Very helpful 1
Sometimes helpful 2
Unhelpful 3

27 ( )

(d) Lecture Times

Suitable 1
Usually alright 2
Unsuitable 3

28 ( )

(e) Location of College

Close to home 1
A reasonable distance 2
Too far to travel 3

29 ( )

(f) Child Care

No problem 1
Sometimes a problem 2
A major problem 3

30 ( )

(g) Student Counselling

Very helpful 1
Of some help 2
Not at all helpful 3
Not used 4

31 ( )

(h) Expenses (Fees, books, transport, living expenses)

No problem 1
Sometimes a problem 2
A major problem 3

32 ( )

32 How were your expenses covered while studying at TAFE?
Please circle the major source of income (one only)

Paid work 1
Personal savings 2
Partner 3
Friend/Relative 4
Pension 5
Training Allowance 6
Austudy 7

33 ( )

For Office Use

33 If you needed child care while studying at TAFE, how were these needs met? (Skip this question if it is not relevant)

On campus child care centre 1
Other child care centre 2
Family day care 3
Family or friends 4

34 If you commenced a course of study at TAFE but did not complete it, what were your main reasons for withdrawing? More than one number may be circled. (Skip this question if it is not relevant)

(a) Course too difficult 1
(b) Course irrelevant or uninteresting 2
(c) Course structure too formal 3
(d) Teaching staff unfriendly/not helpful 4
(e) Other students unfriendly 5
(f) Hostile atmosphere on campus 6
(g) Financial problems 7
(h) Child care problems 8
(i) Lack of family support 9
(j) Transport problems 10
(k) Lecture times unsuitable 11
(l) Ill health or disability 12
(m) Other (please specify).....13

EFFECT OF "NOW" ON FURTHER STUDY

35 How important was the NOW programme to your further study?

Very important 1
Important 2
No opinion/not sure 3
Unimportant 4

36 What aspects of the NOW programme were helpful? (Please circle all that you found helpful)

(a) Supportive way of returning to study 1
(b) Improved study skills 2
(c) Information on study options 3
(d) How and where to enrol 4
(e) Encouragement to study 5
(f) Confidence building and assertiveness training..6
(g) Decision making 7

For Office Use

37 Do you think that NCW could have done more to assist you to pursue further study?

Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 3

56 ( )

If YES, please give your ideas:

_____

_____

_____

57 ( )
58 ( )
59 - 79 Blank

THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS. HOWEVER, YOU MAY LIKE TO COMMENT ABOUT THE NCW PROGRAMME OR YOUR EXPERIENCES SINCE THEN - PART 5 PROVIDES SPACE FOR YOU TO DO THIS.

80 (2)

PART 4 : NO PAID EMPLOYMENT OR STUDY SINCE "NOW"

For Office Use

38 At the end of the NOW programme, was it your intention to find a paid job?

Yes .....1 **Please go to Question 39**
No .....2 **Please go to Question 41**

39 What do you think prevented you from getting a paid job?

(Please circle all of the relevant items)

(a) Lack of qualifications/experience 1
(b) Considered too old by employers 2
(c) Discrimination (sex or race) 3
(d) Lack of job application/interview skills 4
(e) Unable to find child care 5
(f) Transport problems 6
(g) Illhealth/disability 7
(h) Family not supportive 8
(i) Lack of self confidence 9
(j) Other (please give details below).....10

_____

_____

40 Do you think that the NOW programme could have done more to assist you to pursue a career? Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 3

If YES, please give your ideas:

_____

_____

41 At the end of the NOW programme, was it your intention to go on to further study?

Yes ..... 1 **Please go to Question 42**
No ..... 2 **Please go to Question 44**

42 What do you think prevented you from enrolling in a further course?

(Please circle all of the relevant items)

		For Office Use
(a)	Wanted a break before moving on to further study.....1	16 ( )
(b)	Not interested in any of the available courses 2	17 ( )
(c)	Could not decide what course to do 3	18 ( )
(d)	Did not meet entry requirements of chosen course.....4	19 ( )
(e)	Could not afford the fees and/or cost of books 5	20 ( )
(f)	Lecture times not suitable 6	21 ( )
(g)	Child care not available 7	22 ( )
(h)	Transport problems 8	23 ( )
(i)	Ill health or disability 9	24 ( )
(j)	Long queue to enrol 10	25 ( )
(k)	Admissions staff not helpful 11	26 ( )
(l)	Family not supportive 12	27 ( )
(m)	Lack of self confidence 13	28 ( )
(n)	Other (please give details below) 14	29 ( )

_____

_____

43 Do you think that the NOW programme could have done more to assist you to go on to further study? 30 ( )

Yes 1
No 2
Not sure 3

If YES, Please give your ideas:

_____ 31 ( )
32 ( )

_____

44 Do you plan to study within the next year? 33 ( )

Yes 1
No 2

34 - 79 Blank
80 (3)

THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS. HOWEVER, YOU MAY LIKE TO COMMENT ABOUT THE NOW PROGRAMME OR YOUR EXPERIENCES SINCE THEN - PART 5 PROVIDES SPACE FOR YOU TO DO THIS

PART 5 : COMMENTS

1 About the NOW Programme.

For Office Use

2 About your activities and experiences since "NOW" (further study, paid work, volunteer work, etc.)

N244WI4

CONTACT INFORMATION (Optional)

If you are prepared to be interviewed as a follow on from this questionnaire, please place a tick in the box.

If so, please complete the contact details below.

NB: This information will be treated in strictest confidence.

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

_____

_____

TELEPHONE NO : _____

APPENDIX 2 : INTERVIEW FORMAT

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH : LIFE PATTERN

- Where living - how long
- Schooling (explore reason for early leaving)
- Early work history
- Marriage
- Husband/Partner's occupation
- Motherhood
- Adult education
- Adult employment

NOW COURSE

- Reason for enrolment
- How well were original goals/needs met? Be specific re aspects of the program
- Attitude of family/friends
- Problems encountered
- Suggested improvements to the program

FURTHER STUDY

- Influence of NOW on:
  - decision to do further study
  - range of study options
  - choice of course
  - ability to cope with study
- Relationship between hands-on area of NOW and type of course(s)
- Relationship between plans at completion of NOW and course(s) undertaken
- Post-study career goals:
  - what are they
  - influence of NOW on these

- Experience of studying at TAFE (including withdrawals) in relation to:

  - enrolment procedures
  - college environment
  - timetables
  - course structure
  - teachers
  - other students
  - child care
  - distance from college
  - access to amenities/facilities
  - income support
  - family support

PAID EMPLOYMENT

- Influence of NOW on:

  - decision to seek paid work
  - range of career options
  - choice of job
  - ability to cope with working

- Relationship between hands-on area of NOW and occupation(s)

- Relationship between plans at completion of NOW and this/these job(s)

- Discuss job(s) in terms of:

  - security
  - status/pay
  - career path
  - job satisfaction
  - suitability (hours, flexibility etc)

- Influence of NOW on getting a job with these features

- Reasons for seeking paid employment

APPENDIX 3 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Table 1 : Age In Years (N=303)

Age Range	N	%
22 - 25	9	3.0
26 - 30	35	11.5
31 - 35	65	21.5
36 - 40	67	22.1
41 - 45	57	18.8
46 - 50	34	11.2
51 - 71	36	11.9
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	303	100.0

Median Age : 38

Table 2 : Marital Status (N=308)

Marital Status	N	%
Single	12	3.9
Married	236	76.6
Divorced/Widowed/Separated	60	19.5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	308	100.0

Table 3 : Dependent Children (all ages) (N=308)

Number of Children	N	%
None	77	25.0
One	63	20.5
Two	114	37.0
Three	45	14.6
Four	7	2.3
Five	1	0.3
Six	1	0.3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	308	100.0

APPENDIX 3 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PROFILE (Cont'd):

Table 4 : Dependent Children (Pre-School) (N=308)

Number of Children	N	%
None	235	76.3
One	42	13.6
Two	29	9.4
Three	2	0.6
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	308	100.0

Table 5 : Linguistic Background (N=308)

First Language	N	%
English	274	90.7
Other than English*	28	9.3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	308	100.0

* Italian (1), Dutch (3), East European (3), German (3), Portugese (1), Chinese (4), Middle Eastern (2), French (4), Not specified (5)

Table 6 : Disability (N=296)

	N	%
No disability	280	94.6
Disability*	16	5.4
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	296	100.0

* Physical (12), Developmental (3), Psychiatric (2), - one respondent recorded 2 types of disability.

APPENDIX 3 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PROFILE (Cont'd):

Table 7 : Age Left School (N=302)

Age in Years	N	%	Cumulative %
12	2	0.7	0.7
13	1	0.3	1.0
14	42	13.9	14.9
15	105	34.8	49.7
16	79	26.2	75.9
17	58	19.2	96.1
18	10	3.3	99.4
19+	5	1.6	100.0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	302	100.0	

Table 8 : Highest School Year Completed (N=299)

School Level	N	%	Cumulative %
Year 9 or less	52	17.4	17.4
Year 10	132	44.1	61.5
Year 11	43	14.4	75.9
Year 12	72	24.1	100.0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	299	100.0	

Table 9 : Studies Undertaken Between Leaving School and Enrolling in NOW (N=182)

Type of Course	N	% of Respondents (N=182)
Year 10 (Junior Cert)	9	4.9
Year 12 (Leaving Cert)	23	12.6
TAFE or Business College Course	54	29.7
Degree/Diploma (incl. Nursing)	39	21.4
Adult Education Course	128	70.3
TOTAL RESPONSES*	253	

* Multiple response possible.

APPENDIX 3 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PROFILE (Cont'd):

Table 10 : Workforce Absence Pre-NOW (N=302)

Length of Workforce Absence	N	%
Worked while doing NOW	63	20.9
Less than 1 year	20	6.6
1 - 5 years	73	24.2
6 - 10 years	54	17.9
10 + years	87	28.8
Never worked	5	1.7
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	302	100.0

Table 11 : Last Occupation Pre-NOW (N=292)

Occupation	N	%
Managers/Administrators (incl self-employed)	11	3.8
Teachers	12	4.1
Other Professionals	6	2.1
Nurses	19	6.5
Other Para Professionals	6	2.1
Hairdressers	3	1.0
Other Trades	4	1.4
Office Workers	114	39.0
Sales Assistants	55	18.8
Child Care & Refuge Workers	4	1.4
Enrolled Nurses	5	1.7
Other Personal Service Workers	6	2.1
Drivers	2	0.7
Factory Hands/Labourers	14	4.8
Domestics/Cleaners/Housekeepers	24	8.2
Kitchen Hands	7	2.4
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	292	100.0

Table 12 : Volunteer Work Pre-NOW (N=302)

	N	%
Did volunteer work	175	57.9
Did not do volunteer work	127	42.1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	302	100.0

APPENDIX 4 : NOW (WA) COURSE AND LOCATION DATA

Table 13 : Where Enrolled (N=302)

Location	N	%
Armadale Technical Centre	6	2.0
Balga TAFE College	13	4.3
Bayswater Learning Centre	4	1.3
Carine TAFE College	16	5.3
Carlisle TAFE College	35	11.6
Fremantle TAFE College	18	6.0
Granny Spiers Community House	1	0.3
Guildford Work Option Centre	3	1.0
Kalamunda Learning Centre	2	0.7
Midland TAFE College	3	1.0
Mt Lawley Learning Centre	2	0.7
Perth TAFE College	4	1.3
Rockingham TAFE College	11	3.6
Scarborough Technical Centre	8	2.6
Thornlie TAFE College	44	14.6
Wembley TAFE College	2	0.7
Total Metro	172	56.9
Great Southern TAFE College	26	8.6
South-West TAFE College	17	5.6
Carnarvon TAFE School	3	1.0
Collie TAFE School	16	5.3
Esperance TAFE School	29	9.6
Geraldton TAFE College	16	5.3
Mandurah Women's Club	9	3.0
Margaret River	2	0.7
Wagin TAFE Centre	12	4.0
Total Non-Metro	130	43.1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	302	100.0

Table 14 : Number of NOW Subjects Taken (N=305)

Number of Subjects	N	%
One	75	24.6
Two	57	18.7
Three	31	10.2
Four	57	18.7
Five (all)	85	27.8
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	305	100.0

APPENDIX 4 : NOW (WA) COURSE AND LOCATION DATA (Cont'd):

Table 15 : NOW Enrolments by Subject

Subject	Enrolled		Did Not Enrol		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assert Training	276	90.5	29	9.5	305	100.0
Apt & Abilities	206	67.5	99	32.5	305	100.0
Emply & Educ	175	57.4	130	42.6	305	100.0
Personal Effect	177	58.0	128	42.0	305	100.0
Non-Traditional	101	33.2	203	66.8	304	100.0

Table 16 : Completed NOW Subjects Enrolled In (N=303)

Outcome	N	%
Completed	266	87.8
Did Not Complete	37	12.2
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	303	100.0

Table 17 : Reasons for Non-Completion (N=39)

Reason	N
Course uninteresting	12
Secured full-time work	6
Lack of family support	5
Unhappy with teacher	2
Ill health	2
Enrolled in another course	2
Other reason	10
TOTAL RESPONSES*	39

* More than one response possible.

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA

Table 18 : Length of Time Between Finishing NOW and Enrolling in Further Study (N=164)

Length of Time	N	%	Cumulative %
1 month or less	58	35.4	35.4
2 - 5 months	64	39.0	74.4
6 - 12 months	26	15.9	90.2
More than 1 year	16	9.8	100.0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	164	100.0	

Table 19 : Number of Courses Taken Post-NOW (N=185)

Number of Courses	Number of Respondents	%	Total Number of Courses
One	114	61.8	114
Two	41	22.0	82
Three	19	10.2	57
Four	6	3.2	24
Five	1	0.5	5
Six	2	1.1	12
Seven	-	-	-
Eight	1	0.5	8
Nine	1	0.5	9
TOTAL	185	100.0	311

Table 20 : Distribution of Marital Status and Further Study

Marital Status	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	7	*	5	*	12	*
Married	140	59.3	96	40.7	236	100.0
D/W/S	38	64.4	21	35.6	59	100.0

* Too small to percentage.

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 21 : Distribution of Dependent Children and Further Study

Number of Dependent Children	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	45	59.2	31	40.8	76	100.0
One or More	140	60.6	91	39.4	231	100.0

Table 22 : Distribution of Linguistic Background and Further Study

First Language	Further Study		No Study		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	165	60.4	108	39.6	273	100.0
Other than English	18	64.3*	10	35.7*	28	100.0

* Caution should be exercised when interpreting percentages from a small sample size.

Table 23 : Distribution of Marital Status and Study Mode

Marital Status	Full-Time Courses		Part-Time Courses		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	4	*	6	*	10	*
Married	22	13.3	144	86.7	166	100.0
D/W/S	11	22.9	37	77.1	48	100.0
TOTAL COURSES**	37		187		224	

* Too small to percentage.
** Some respondents gave details of more than one course.

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 24 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of Atmosphere (N=134)

Atmosphere Considered	N	%
Friendly	108	80.6
Little intimidating	24	17.9
Unfriendly	2	1.5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	134	100.0

Table 25 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of Course Structure (N=131)

Course Structure Considered	N	%
Informal	45	34.4
More formal than NOW	71	54.2
Very formal	15	11.5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	131	100.0

Table 26 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of Teaching Staff (N=133)

Teachers Considered	N	%
Very helpful	101	75.9
Sometimes helpful	30	22.6
Unhelpful	2	1.5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	133	100.0

Table 27 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of Lecture Times (N=131)

Lecture Times Considered	N	%
Suitable	93	71.0
Usually okay	30	22.9
Unsuitable	8	6.1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	131	100.0

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 28 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of College Location (N=131)

Location Considered	N	%
Close to home	58	44.3
Reasonable distance	61	46.6
Too far to travel	12	9.2
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	131	100.0

Table 29 : Further Study at TAFE - Student Perceptions of Childcare (N=94)

Childcare Considered	N	%
No problem	77	81.9
Sometimes a problem	15	16.0
Major problem	2	2.1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	94	100.0

Table 30 : Further Study at TAFE - Use of Student Counselling Service (N=129)

Student Counselling	N	%
Used	58	45.0
Never used	71	55.0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	129	100.0

Table 31 : Further Study at TAFE - User Perceptions of Counselling Service (N=58)

Student Counselling Considered	N	%
Very helpful	27	46.6
Sometimes helpful	24	41.4
Unhelpful	7	12.0
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	58	100.0

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 32 : Further Study at TAFE - Source of Financial Support (N=135)

Source	N	%
Paid work	25	18.5
Personal savings	16	11.9
Partner	57	42.2
Pension	31	23.0
Training allowance	1	0.7
Austudy	5	3.7
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	135	100.0

Table 33 : Length of Time Between Finishing NOW and Securing Paid Employment (N=166)

Length of Time	N	%
Already employed	53	31.9
Less than 1 month	27	16.3
2 - 5 months	30	18.1
6 - 12 months	32	19.3
More than 1 year	24	14.5
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	166	100.0

Table 34 : Mode of Employment (N=229)

Mode	N	%
Full-time jobs	47	20.5
Part-time jobs	103	45.0
Casual	79	34.5
TOTAL RESPONSES*	229	100.0

* Some respondents gave details of more than one job.

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 35 : Job and Study Concurrent (N=144)

Had a Job While Studying	N	%
Yes	65	39.6
No	99	60.4
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	144	100.0

Table 36 : Last Occupation Pre-NOW Compared with Occupation Post-NOW (N=162)

	N	%
Same occupation	58	35.8
Different occupation	104	64.2
TOTAL	162	100.0

NOTE: Data produced by computer matching of ASCO codes for pre-NOW occupation and post-NOW occupation (first job).

Table 37 : Level of Job Satisfaction - Most Recent Job (N=162)

Satisfaction Level	N	%
Very satisfied	49	30.2
Satisfied	52	32.1
Unsure	5	3.1
Dissatisfied	41	25.3
Very dissatisfied	15	9.3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	162	100.0

APPENDIX 5 : NOW (WA) OUTCOMES DATA (Cont'd):

Table 38 : Reasons for Job Dissatisfaction (N=57)

Reason	N	%
Type of work	25	43.9
Boss	14	24.6
Hours of work	3	5.3
Pay	4	7.0
Training	5	8.8
Job prospects	6	10.5
TOTAL RESPONSES*	57	100.0

* Multiple response possible.

Table 39 : Intentions of Respondents who neither enrolled in Further Study nor secured paid employment post-NOW

Plans at Finish of NOW	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Intended to get a paid job	27	38.6	43	61.4	70	100.0
Intended to do further study	34	56.7	26	43.3	60	100.0

APPENDIX 6 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS DATA

Table 40 : For those who enrolled in Further Study, how could NOW have done more to assist? (N=22)

Suggestion	N
Longer course or follow-up	2
Fewer hours per week	1
Expand "Employ & Ed" unit	2
More hands-on skills	1
More English	1
Include Small Business Mgmt	1
More study information	8
Provide individual career guidance	3
Less discussion of personal problems	1
More experienced teachers	1
Include work experience	1
TOTAL RESPONSES*	22

* Multiple response possible.

Table 41 : For those who had paid employment, how could NOW have done more to assist? (N=22)

Suggestion	N
Longer course or follow-up	3
Shorter course	1
More subjects	1
More hours per week	1
Fewer hours per week	1
Expand "Employ & Ed" unit	1
Expand "Assertiveness Training"	2
More hands-on skills	1
Include work experience	1
Provide individual career guidance	8
More employment information/ skills	1
Less discussion of personal problems	1
TOTAL RESPONSES*	22

* Multiple response possible.

APPENDIX 6 : NOW (WA) PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS DATA (Cont'd):

Table 42 : For those who neither enrolled in Further Study nor secured paid employment, how could NOW have done more to assist?

Suggestion	To Do Further Study (N=9) N	To Find Paid Work (N=5) N
Longer course	-	1
More hands-on skills	2	-
Include work experience	-	1
More study information	3	-
Career guidance	1	1
Cut back "Personal Presentation" Unit	1	-
Less feminism	1	-
Less discussion of personal problems	-	1
More experienced teachers	1	-
Guest speakers	-	1
Include public speaking	-	1
Include needs of older women	-	1
TOTAL RESPONSES*	9	7

* Multiple responses possible.

M346WIN17 (JULIAN2)

END

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